

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


HARVARD
DIVINITY
SCHOOL
Andover-Harvard
Theological Library









JESUS CHRIST:

HIS TIMES, LIFE, AND WORK.

BY

E. DE PRESSENSÉ, D.D.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

ANNIE HARWOOD.



SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

London:
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
LATE JACKSON, WALFORD, AND HODDER,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXVIII.



Gift of
Prof. C. H. Toy, LL.D.
(1320)

The Right of Translation is reserved to

Messrs. HODDER & STOUGHTON, *London.*
M. WAISENHAUS, *Halle (Prussia).*
M. KEMINK, *Utrecht (Netherlands).*
Messrs. SCRIBNER, *New York.*

UNWIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS, BUCKLERSBURY LONDON, E.C.

413
868

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THIS Second Edition in English of "The Life and Times of Jesus Christ" has been carefully compared with the latest issue of M. Pressensé's work from the French press, and corrected by it. It is hoped, therefore, it may be found free, at least, from the minor inaccuracies of the First Edition. The translator desires to acknowledge her obligations to the friends who have kindly assisted in the revision of the proofs.

ANNIE HARWOOD.

LONDON, *July*, 1868.

re-



PREFACE.

THIS book is not the result of any particular circumstances, nor is it an answer to any contemporary work which has left its impress on the mind of our age. It forms a natural part of my series of works on primitive Christianity. It was always my intention to write it. If I have entered on the great undertaking sooner than I had purposed, it has been in obedience to the imperative call of our day. The religious question, and more especially the question—"What think ye of Christ?" has come before our times with a directness which reminds us of the sixteenth century. I do not hesitate to admit how much the recent work of one of the most brilliant spirits of our age, has contributed to this revival of interest. I said, candidly, what I thought of that work on its first appearance. I retract nothing from the judgment I then formed of M. Renan's "Vie de Jésus;" but it would be impossible to deny that his book has given an impetus to thought, and fired the public mind with an enthusiasm for questions, which twenty years ago would assuredly have been pronounced superannuated.

Let it be freely granted that this immense success, indicating as it does amongst us, a great ignorance of the essential character of Christianity and of religion in general, carries a severe lesson to the defenders of the Gospel. Why have they left it to their adversaries to bring Christ near to man, by repre-

senting Him in the historical setting of His age? No doubt, under pretext of restoring to Him His human character, these have deprived Him of His divinity and His sanctity. But He had been too often presented as an abstract dogma; here we have only exaggeration carried to the opposite extreme, and a romantic fiction substituted for a theological treatise. Let it be our endeavour to arrive at the true history, by transporting ourselves to the Judæa of the times of the Herods—that troubled epoch when so much good blended with so much evil, and so many pious aspirations clashed with low ambitions. Upon this background of real human life, the divine and holy beauty of the Redeemer shines forth more gloriously than from the golden nimbus which encircles the passionless face of the conventional Christ.

Too often the manhood of Jesus has been entirely sacrificed to His Godhead; divines have forgotten that the latter is inseparable from the former, and that the Saviour-Christ is not God hidden in a human form, but God made man—the Son of God humbled and become obedient, in the bold language of St. Paul, a Christ who veritably submitted Himself to all the conditions of human life. From this point of view alone is it possible to attempt a history of Jesus. I venture to hope that it will be found to harmonise, both in the minds of my readers and my own, with that entire faith in His Divinity, which has been the universal belief of Christians for eighteen centuries.

It may, perhaps, be asked—"What end is to be gained by a new history of Christ? Have we not the Gospels? What can be added to those incomparable narratives, so vivid and artless, the pure and transparent mirror in which the image of Jesus is reflected in all its gentleness and majesty? Is it not enough for us to have, as an historian, John, the friend and brother of the Master whom he worshipped?" None can be more ready than I to recognise the inestimable value of this primitive testimony—that which is authoritative, that which alone bears the impress of the creative age of the Church. Those who have themselves

attempted to depict the life of Jesus, are most prepared to appreciate the unique worth of the Gospels, and count themselves happy in being able to turn from all the imperfections of their rough delineation, to those inspired painters who reached the climax of art without any artistic methods, and whose perfect simplicity brings us into direct contact with the living Saviour. And yet, I believe, that there is a use in taking up after them, and under their authority, a subject on which they are for ever our masters.

For, in the first place, the attacks made on Christianity vary from time to time; and we are therefore constrained to reconquer, again and again, the disputed ground from the enemy. Now the Gospel history has been one of the points most strongly assailed, especially since the rise of criticism. Then, we must not forget that the first historians of Jesus addressed themselves to readers who were their contemporaries, and who were perfectly acquainted with the scenes and circumstances amidst which Christ lived, with the condition of His country, and the character of His age. A few brief indications in their writings sufficed to enable Jews and Romans to represent to themselves not only the drama of the Gospel history, but also the theatre in which it was enacted. This acquaintance is absolutely necessary in order to give anything more than a vague and abstract idea of the ministry and work of Jesus. It is evident that what was then understood intuitively can now be grasped only by a vigorous effort of mind. Knowledge is indispensable to restore colour to the past, because it alone enables us to reascend the stream of time, and make ourselves, in a manner, witnesses of the events.

Lastly, as Christ is above all the ages, no single century can exhaust the riches of truth which are in Him. Every period discloses some new motive for love and adoration. It is not that any age can go beyond the Gospel; for it contains all that we can ever know of Jesus; but it is like the treasury in the parable, from which the householder brings forth new things after the old. Our conflicts, our griefs, our efforts, disclose to



or from the transmitted influences of Alexandria, was the living contradiction of all that surrounded Him. The importance of such a result, if it is really attained, cannot be misconceived.

The preliminary questions are brought to a close with the chapter entitled "The Gospels." It is very essential to vindicate against contemporary criticism, the credibility of the documents from which we draw the history of Jesus. This is the only means of laying a sure foundation of the building. Are we dealing with legend or history? this is the grand question.

In the succeeding books, I have endeavoured to unfold the life of Jesus, without much discursion from the thread of the narrative, referring disputed points to cursory notes; further than this, I have not paused in my history, to take any account of the disputations of the schools. After treating the events which belong to the period preceding the entrance of Jesus on His public ministry,—the period including His infancy, His temptation in the wilderness, and His relations with John the Baptist,—I proceed to give an outline of His plan, His teaching, and His miracles, before entering on the consecutive history of His public ministry. The heads of the three books devoted to this part of the subject will sufficiently indicate their contents:—

I. The Time of Public Favour.
II. The Period of Conflict.
III. The Great Week.—Death and Victory.

My great aim is not so much to demonstrate any theory, as to set forth Jesus such as I see Him, such as He appears to me in the Gospels, such as I worship Him; and to say to my contemporaries—Does this image of Christ seem to you to correspond better with the truth of facts, than those forms under which He has been recently represented to you from the naturalistic point of view? Is it more in harmony with the psychological laws, which suppose the unity of the moral being?



Have we faithfully observed the principles of the philosophy of history, which refuses to admit effects without a cause, and to assign as the motive power of the wide and deep revolution, which marks the commencement of our era, an intangible myth, a religion without any fixed doctrine, a faith without a God?

It is not for me to reply. I have spared no researches which might make me less unworthy of so great a subject. I have journeyed through Judæa and Galilee,—not that I might garnish my work with lavish descriptions of nature, and merge in the dazzling radiance of the East, that calm and quiet beauty of the Gospel, which belongs not to this world,—but that I might engrave, as deeply as possible, that seal of reality which is the token of every true history. The reader will find in my book, at least, entire sincerity; I have not cloaked any of the difficulties I have met; I have faithfully given my thought, and my whole thought, without bending to the bias of any school. I am more and more convinced of the necessity of coming into closer contact with the great fact of Christianity. The nineteenth century has as full a right as the sixteenth to go back to the fountain-head of the faith, unhindered by any tradition of men. But this does not prevent my bowing before the everlasting Gospel. It is no slavish submission, it is the act of a free man to acknowledge, on sufficient grounds, a divine authority. I know well how this acceptance of the sublime foolishness of the cross—which is indeed, the climax of the supernatural—raises a smile of pity on the lips of those who do not behold in it the wisdom of God and the marvellous response to the deepest needs of man. I only ask of my opponents not to pronounce, in my case, that judgment without a hearing, which is so readily awarded to the defenders of the preternatural, and which dispenses with any impartial examination. I appeal, by anticipation, against those summary judgments which are unworthy of science. I demand liberty of thought and conscience for every man. I repudiate all

privilege and all coercion, especially in matters of faith. My whole soul yearns for the full consecration of religious liberty, for that absolute severance of the two powers, which shall establish the equality of all beliefs in the eye of the law. I desire, for my own opinions, neither dole nor protection from the civil power; for, in my view, none have more reason to rest content with the common rights in the domain of thought, than enlightened Christians. There is implied weakness in the very semblance of protection.

This book has been written in troublous times, when a strong wind is blowing the men of our generation further and further from my most cherished convictions; it will soon be seen that this icy wind sows seeds of death on its passage, and blasts all on which it blows. Upon the shores towards which it is driving us, we shall find none of the best blessings of life. Liberty, social justice, generous care for the feeble and the fallen, will all be lost on that fatal day when the cause of Christ shall suffer shipwreck; for—for the honour of humanity be it said—this transitory life of earth owes all its grandeur and beauty to that higher world whence man came. Christians hold, as their first article of faith, that this higher world should be sought after for itself, and that Christ's restoring and elevating work begins with the individual who finds, at his feet alone, peace and a power victorious over evil. They plainly avow that they are not disinterested in this question of religion; it involves for them all that is worth living for. Thus, while they carefully maintain the individuality of their personal faith, they combine, ever more and more, in spite of all that yet divides them, in the defence of their common standard.

I have certainly not abandoned my own peculiar beliefs in this apology for the Gospel; but I have rejoiced to feel the close bond uniting me to the great company of the disciples of Christ in all ages.

I have a firm faith in the issue of the crisis. I believe not only in the triumph of Christianity, but in the purification of



the various churches, by the fire of conflict. This is my stedfast hope. My most ardent desire is to contribute, in my feeble measure, to dissipate some of the misconceptions by which the God-Man is veiled from the eyes of my contemporaries.

EDMOND DE PRESSENSÉ.

PARIS, *Nov.* 30, 1865.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
PREFACE	v
BOOK I.	
PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS.	
CHAPTER I.—Of the philosophical and religious bases of the Life of Christ.—Of the supernatural ...	1
I.—Refutation of objections made to the Supernatural from the Naturalistic point of view	5—18
II.—Refutation of objections made to the Supernatural from the Theistic point of view	18—2
CHAPTER II.—Jesus Christ and the Religions of the Past	29
I.—Historical glance at ancient Paganism.—Asiatic Paganism.—Hellenic Paganism.—Grecian Philosophy.—The Greco-Roman World	34—44
II.—Religion of the Old Testament.—Conception of God amongst the Israelites.—Idea of evil.—Holiness.—Divine origin of the Old Testament.—Israel separated from other nations.—Mosaic institutions.—The law.—Prophecy...	44—58
CHAPTER III.—The Judaism of the Decline	59
I.—Judaism under the Persians.—Temple on Mount Gerizim	64—66
II.—Judaism under the Greeks.—Book of Jesus Sirach.—Beginnings of Sadduceeism.—Beginnings of Pharisaism.—The Psalter of Solomon	66—70
III.—The Maccabees and the Roman Empire.—Messiah a new Maccabeus.—Messiah of the Sibylline oracles.—Fresh subjugation of the Jews.—The Roman yoke.—The Books of the Maccabees	70—77

PAGE.

IV.—Alexandrine Judaism.—Philo.—Absolute contrast between Philo and the Gospel.—Hellenistic Jews 77—84

V.—Sects and parties in Judæa.—Essenes.—Sadducees.—Pharisees 84—88

VI.—Movement of thought in Palestine before the birth of Jesus Christ.—Growing importance of the rabbi.—Course of rabbinical studies.—Jewish tribunals.—Teachings of the rabbis.—Vehemence of Jewish prejudices.—Incomprehensibility of God.—Tendency to place God at a distance from man.—Pharisaic morality; its mercenary character.—Materialism of the Jewish hopes.—Apocalyptic dreams.—Book of Enoch.—Fourth book of Esdras.—Contrast of the Talmud to the Gospel.—Superstitious ideas respecting demons.—Political agitators.—The indifferent.—True Judaism ... 88—109

CHAPTER IV.—Sources of the history of Jesus Christ.—Credibility of the Gospel history 110

I.—General proofs of the reality of the Gospel history.—Testimony of Pliny the Younger.—Testimony of Suetonius and of Tacitus.—Testimony of Josephus.—Testimony of the Talmud.—Testimony of the Church.—Testimony of the Church of the first century.—Character of the primitive witnesses.—Uncontested letters of Paul.—Testimony of the Revelation.—The Gospels recognised in the third century... 111—119

II.—The first century, the date of our four Gospels.—Testimony of the second century.—Testimony of heretics.—Determination of the sacred text in the second century.—Language of the synoptics.—Difference between the synoptics and the fourth Gospel 119—126

III.—Origin of the synoptics.—Their fundamental agreement.—Correspondences and divergences of the synoptics.—Various explanations.—Gospel spoken before written.—The apostles guardians of primitive tradition.—Tradition enriched by successive memories.—Fidelity of these memories.—The written narratives.—Formation of one type of narration.—Appearance of the Gospels.

PAGE.

— Canonical Gospels. — Gospel according to Matthew.—Hebrew and Greek Gospels.—First Gospel not Judeo-Christian.—Gospel according to Mark.—Testimony of Papias.—Relations between Mark and Peter. — Gospel of Mark written at Rome.—Relations between Mark and Matthew.—Third Gospel: Represents the teaching of Paul.—Luke author of the third Gospel.—Date of this Gospel 126—155

IV.—Fourth Gospel.—State of the Church at the close of the first century.—Adaptation of the Gospel of John to the requirements of the times.—Sketch of the life of St. John.—John alone able to write the fourth Gospel.—External evidence.—Authenticity of the fourth Gospel.—Unity of its plan.—Refutation of objections.—Conclusion 155—182

CHAPTER V.—Doctrinal bases of the life of Jesus ... 183—185

BOOK II.

PREPARATION OF JESUS FOR HIS WORK.—GENERAL CHARACTER OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I.—Childhood of Jesus 186

I.—Birth of Jesus Christ, year of Rome 750.—Anticipations of the great event.—Vision of Zacharias.—The Annunciation.—Miraculous conception of Jesus.—Song of Mary.—Birth of John the Baptist.—First census in Judæa.—Journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.—Birth of Jesus Christ.—The Shepherds 186—200

II.—Childhood of Jesus.—The presentation.—Adoration of the Magi.—The star.—Massacre of the children.—Childhood of Jesus at Nazareth.—The child Jesus and the doctors of the Temple.—Development of Jesus 200—209

PAGE.

CHAPTER II.—John the Baptist.—Baptism of Jesus Christ 21[illegible]

I.—Preparation and first preachings of the Forerunner.—John the Baptist the new Elias.—Preparation of John the Baptist for his mission.—John the Baptist in the Desert of Judæa.—Preaching of John the Baptist.—Baptism of the Forerunner.—Effects of his preaching.—His humility 210—220

II.—Baptism of Jesus Christ, year of Rome 780 ... 220—224

III.—John the Baptist and Herod Antipas.—Fresh testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus.—John the Baptist and Herod.—Doubts of John the Baptist.—Testimony of Jesus to John the Baptist ... 224—228

CHAPTER III.—The Temptation in the wilderness.—Jesus conqueror over temptation 229—236

CHAPTER IV.—The plan of Jesus... 237

I.—Reality and unity of the plan of Jesus 237—240

II.—The kingdom of God.—Fulfilment of the old covenant.—The plan of Jesus inseparable from His person 240—247

III.—The titles which Jesus claims.—Son of David.—Son of God.—Son of man 247—251

IV.—The Church and the Apostolate 251—255

CHAPTER V.—The Teaching of Jesus Christ 256

I.—The subject of Christ's teaching.—Jesus the subject of His own teaching.—Infallibility of Jesus 256—259

II.—The form and method of the teaching of Jesus Christ.—Calm majesty of His language.—Popularity of His teaching.—Its unscholastic character.—Its moral character.—Authority of the word of Jesus.—Variety of His teaching.—Parables.—Conclusion 259—271

CHAPTER VI.—Miracles of Jesus Christ 272

I.—Miracles of Jesus Christ in general.—The miracles inseparable from the discourses.—Difference between miracles and prodigies.—Miracles reveal Jesus Christ.—Divers sorts of Miracles.—Intention of Miracles 272—278

II.—The healing of the Demoniacs.—Reality of cases of possession.—Healing of the Possessed... ... 278—281

BOOK III.

FIRST PERIOD OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.—Public Ministry of Jesus, from His baptism to His return into Galilee after the feast of Purim. (Year of Rome 780-782.) Three periods of the Ministry of Jesus. Unity of His Ministry ... 282—284
I.—Political condition of Judæa 284—288
II.—Commencement of the Ministry of Jesus.—The first Disciples.—First Miracle of Jesus.—Jesus drives out the sellers from the Temple.—Conversation with Nicodemus.—Jesus passes through Samaria 288—296
III.—Return of Jesus into Galilee.—Meeting with the Samaritan woman.—First public Preaching.—Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth 296—301
IV.—The Feast of Purim at Jerusalem.—Healing of the Paralytic.—Apologetic Discourse 301—304
CHAPTER II.—Ministry of Jesus in Galilee during the time of public favour... 305
I.—General character of the Ministry of Jesus in Galilee.—Early Miracles and early public Discourses in that country.—Call of the Disciples.—Lake of Tiberias.—Christ's manner of life.—One of the days of Jesus.—Healing of a Leper.—Time of public favour.—Discontent of the Pharisees ... 305—316
II.—Choice of the Twelve apostles 316—320
III.—Sermon on the Mount.—The Beatitudes.—The new Law 320—325
CHAPTER III.—Preparation for the Crisis in Galilee ... 326
I.—Sojourn at Nain.—Raising of the Widow's Son.—The Sinner of Nain.—Compassion of Jesus for the despised.—Parable of the Prodigal Son ... 326—330
II.—Various Parables and Miracles.—Parables relating to the kingdom of God.—The Demoniac of Gadara.—Raising of Jairus' Daughter.—First Mission of the apostles 330—336
CHAPTER IV.—The Crises of the faith in Galilee ... 337
I.—The Multiplication of the Loaves at Bethsaida Julias.—The Tempest on the Lake.—Discourse at Capernaum 337—343

BOOK IV.

PERIOD OF CONFLICT.

PAGE.

CHAPTER I.—Delegation sent by the Pharisees at Jerusalem into Galilee.—Journey into the Lands of the North.—From the Spring of the year of Rome, 782, to the Autumn of the same year 344

I.—First proceedings of the Pharisees in Galilee ... 344—348

II.—Journey into the Lands of the North.—The Woman of Canaan.—Journey to Cæsarea Philippi.—Peter's great confession.—"Thou art Peter."—The Transfiguration.—Healing of the Demoniac Boy.—Various Exhortations.—The Lord's Prayer 348—356

CHAPTER II.—Sojourn at Jerusalem on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles. (Autumn of the Year of Rome, 782) 357

Attitude of Jesus during the Feast.—Defence of Jesus.—Discussion with the Members of the Sanhedrim 357—366

Healing of the Man born Blind.—Inquiry of the Sanhedrim.—The Good Shepherd and the Hireling 366—369

CHAPTER III.—Last Sojourn in Galilee.—Solemn return to Jerusalem through Samaria.—Feast of the Dedication.—(From October to December, 782) ... 370

I.—Return of Jesus into Galilee.—The Duty of Charity.—Mission of the Seventy.—Surrender of Earthly Possessions.—Characteristic Sayings of Jesus 370—380

II.—Return to Jerusalem through Samaria.—Feast of the Dedication 380—382

CHAPTER IV.—Sojourn in Peræa.—The Family of Bethany.—Resurrection of Lazarus 382

I.—Sojourn in Peræa.—Words of Jesus on the question of Divorce.—The Rich Young Man.—Law of renunciation.—Compensation for Sacrifices.—Jesus blesses Little Children 382—388

II.—Resurrection of Lazarus.—Deliberations of the Sanhedrim 388—395

BOOK V.

THE GREAT WEEK.—THE CLOSE OF THE STRUGGLE.—DEATH AND VICTORY.

PAGE.

CHAPTER I.—Departure for the Feast.—The Journey.—Jericho.—The Supper at Bethany.—Triumphal Entry 396

I.—Journey to Jericho.—Healing of blind Bartimæus.—Jesus at the house of Zaccheus.—Parable of the Talents... 396—400

II.—The Adoration of Mary of Bethany.—Indignation of Judas 400—404

III.—Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.—The Barren Fig-tree cursed 404- 409

CHAPTER II.—Relations of Jesus with the authorities of His country.—The new religion and the State ... 410—417

CHAPTER III.—The day of Captious Questions... ... 418

I.—Attempt of the Pharisees to ensnare Jesus.—His Reply.—Attempt of the Sadducees.—Jesus' Reply.—Indignant words of the Master.—Denunciation of Pharisaism 418—429

II.—The Great Prophetic Discourse.—Jesus and the Greek Proselytes.—Parables enjoining Watchfulness.—The Final Judgment 429—432

CHAPTER IV.—The Scenes in the Upper Chamber ... 433

I.—Preparations for the Last Supper.—Character of the Jewish Passover.—Jesus washes His Disciples' feet.—The Traitor is pointed out.—The Lord's Supper 433—440

II.—Warnings and Consolations.—The Sacerdotal Prayer 440—445

CHAPTER V.—Passion of Jesus 446

I.—Gethsemane 446—448

II.—The Arrest.—First Trial.—Jesus in the house of Annas.—Peter's Denial.—Jesus before the Sanhedrim 448—452

III.—Jesus before Pilate.—Jesus before Herod Antipas.—Return to the Prætorium.—Condemnation of Jesus 452—456

IV.—The Crucifixion and Burial.—Significance of the Death of Jesus.—The Death of Jesus is redemption 456—472



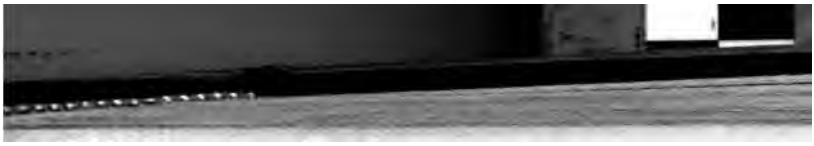
PAGE.

CHAPTER VI.—The Resurrection of Jesus Christ ... 473

I.—The Facts.—First Appearances.—Peter and John at the Sepulchre.—Interview of Jesus with Mary Magdalene. — *Noli me tangere.* — The Disciples at Emmaus.—Jesus appears in the Upper Chamber.—Doubts of Thomas.—Jesus shows Himself by the lake of Tiberias.—Second appearance in Galilee.—The Ascension 473—483

II.—Reality of the Miracle 483—488

III.—Significance of the Resurrection.—Conclusion ... 488—496



BOOK FIRST.

Preliminary Questions.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS BASES OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

ON the very threshold of the great subject before us, we are confronted by two commanding but opposite points of view, between which it is necessary to choose. As the supernatural is admitted or rejected, the whole life of Jesus is transformed from its commencement to its close. In the former case testimony and texts retain their evidential value; in the latter they are beforehand branded with suspicion, and what is left is not fact to be verified, but fable to be interpreted. It is impossible, therefore, to bend too careful a study to a problem so vast and fertile in results; it is the very foundation-stone of the whole building which has to be laid. Now we are at once struck with one patent fact, which greatly complicates the point at issue between the opposing partisans, or rather, which prevents their entering closely and seriously into controversy at all. This is the haughty and contemptuous refusal of the naturalistic school to put to a critical test the opinion of its opponents;—its claim to lay down at the outset, as an indisputable axiom, the negation of the supernatural. This

contempt for faith is in its essence also a contempt for science, a limit imposed on free enquiry, and the first step in the path of prejudice, which is but a blind adherence to a preconceived and untested opinion. It is a flagrant deviation from those great experimental methods which for three centuries have been so constantly increasing the sum of human knowledge. Bacon was right when he pointed out as a source of error "the exaggerated and almost idolatrous respect for human intellect; a respect which turns men away from the contemplation of nature and of experience, and makes them revolve, as it were, in the circle of their own meditations and reflections." If the same peremptory method had been applied to the natural sciences, by which the supernatural is now put out of court without form of trial, we should find ourselves to-day maintaining the theory of vortices with Descartes against Newton, and treating the circulation of the blood as a fable. Free enquiry has no worse foe than trenchant dogmatism, which eludes the test of proof equally in what it affirms and denies.

Are we doing injustice to our adversaries? Let their own words be the judges. "The countries and classes by which the supernatural is received," says M. Renan, "are of secondary importance."* "If we do not enter upon this discussion," writes M. Havet, "it is from the impossibility of doing so without admitting an inadmissible proposition, namely, the mere possibility of the supernatural. Our principle is to hold ourselves constantly aloof from the supernatural, that is, from *the imagination*. The leading principle of all true history, as of all true science, is, that that which is not in nature is nothing, and can be counted as nothing unless as an idea."†

"Positive philosophy," says M. Littré, "sets aside the systems of theology which suppose supernatural action."‡

* Chair of Hebrew in the College of France.
† "Revue des Deux Mondes," 1st August, 1863.
‡ Littré. "Conservation, revolution, et positivisme," p. 26.

We ask whether it is possible to elude examination and escape debate in a more pointed manner than by such words as these? A judgment without law is the only possible result of such polemics. This revolutionary procedure is even more convenient than it is summary; that which is treated thus is no legend born of yesterday, but a mode of thought which has had the greatest spirits for its defenders, and which has ever moved mankind with an incomparable sway.

It can be no argument against the supernatural that miracles have never consented to submit themselves, like dubious drugs,* to the crucial examination of learned bodies. Such an argument implies so utter an ignorance of the moral and religious character of Christianity that it does not deserve to be met. That handful of men who believed, eighteen centuries ago, in the Gospel miracles, were not brought, it is true, before official examiners, but they went down with calm conviction, in presence of a furious populace, into the arena, and sealed with their blood their faith in a risen Lord. Evidence thus attested ceases to be contemptible, and deserves to be at least examined. But no; the miraculous and the incredible are bound together at the very threshold of the enquiry. Strauss, in his new "Life of Jesus," declares that the most direct testimony is inadmissible when it has reference to a fact which does not bend to the laws of nature, and he reminds us of the Roman proverb—"I would not believe that story though Cato himself related it;"† which is equal to saying with one of old, "Even though thou shouldest persuade me, I would yet not be persuaded."

Such an attitude renders all enquiry impossible, and shuts us up to a blind credence. These assertions tend to nothing short of imposing upon us authoritatively a system of

* "Vie de Jésus." M. Renan; Introduction, p. 21.

† "Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet." 1863. MM. Nefftzer and Dolfuss have given us a very good translation of this book. I quote, however, from the original.

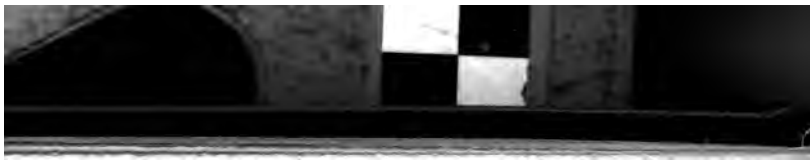
philosophy which is as fairly matter for discussion as anything which has its date within the history of human thought.

In fact, this negation of the supernatural, or rather of its possibility, springs from a fixed theory of the whole nature of things. If this theory be justified to the reason, the cause of naturalism is gained, but not otherwise. It is then to this height that the debate must be carried if it is to have any real issue. But this is not done. The appeal is made rather to modern thought and to the results of the scientific movement—a mode of proceeding which leaves the real question still vague, and passes over in silence, difficulties which would have to be met in a philosophical discussion;—a new and striking proof this of that enervation of the reason of which Christians are the first to complain. We will not follow the example of our opponents and meet them with high and trenchant affirmations; we wish to show more respect for science; and without entering on a complete demonstration, which would require an entire volume, we will give our main reasons for rejecting those philosophical principles, in the name of which those who differ from us dismiss the supernatural. We will establish its possibility, while the history of primitive Christianity, and its well-attested witnesses, shall determine for us the form of its realisation and its true character.

The supernatural is ousted in our day, in the name of two opposing doctrines between which we make a wide distinction. Naturalistic philosophy, or pantheism, rejects it, repelling with it all order, spiritual and moral. Theism, in its different degrees, opposes it on the ground of the very perfection of that order, which appears to it to imply the inviolable fixity of the first laws of nature. We shall maintain the possibility of the supernatural against the one and the other school, not hiding from ourselves that the first has with it the rising tide of opinion; while the second is led, by the very gravity of its position, to recognise ever more and more, the close bond of solidarity, which *exists* between the cause of true spiritualism and that of Christianity.

I. Refutation of objections made to the Supernatural from the Naturalistic point of view.

We will remark, at the outset, that we attach very little weight to the argument, borrowed from the development of the sciences during the last three centuries, which deduces, from their vast advances, the negation of the supernatural. We ask, What are the sciences spoken of? Are they those which bear on the knowledge of nature? We freely admit that these have advanced with giant strides, and one of the most incontestable glories of our age is that of having discovered a multitude of new phenomena in the physical order of things, and of having classed them under demonstrated laws. The domain of the unknown contracts its bounds day by day, and the part which imagination has to play in the explanation of natural facts is reduced almost to the minimum; physics and chemistry have slain the false magicians who cast their spells upon nations in their childhood or their ignorance. But how does the widest acquaintance with nature affect the belief in the supernatural? The very word supposes an order beyond and above that of nature. What matters it from this point of view that man has discovered the secret concatenation of phenomena of a lower order? Does it follow that the chain may not be broken or interrupted by a sovereign power? When all the links in the chain of natural causes and effects have been brought to light, will it follow that the first link may not be in the hands of a wise and sovereign God? Doubtless, if the supernatural were confounded with the marvellous, if it implied a capricious activity, working by perpetual prodigies, so that there could be no fixity in the lower order, the progress of the sciences would be fatal to it. But, rightly understood, it presupposes natural order and laws, since it claims to be recognised precisely in the suspension and interruption of those laws. If there were no fixed natural order, there would be, properly speaking, no room for the supernatural; the extraordinary supposes the ordinary, the exception implies the rule.



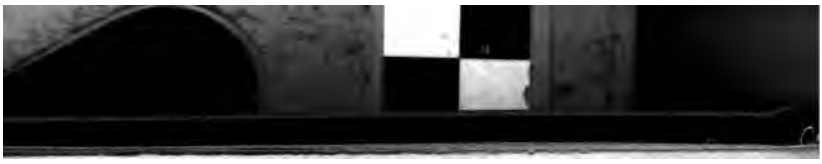
Let science scrutinise as she may the secrets of nature, and go on till she forms of nature herself a vast and admirably classified museum for the spirit of man; faith in the supernatural has nothing to dread from her researches. It would be otherwise if some new and considerable facts, decidedly contrary to final causes, had been produced in support of naturalism. But men are farther than ever from such a demonstration, so that we have a right to affirm that the theses of naturalism appear the less plausible, the more they are confronted with advanced science. What have we then to fear from its progress?

I admit that knowledge brings its intoxication; the intellect which has grasped a planet in its span is fain to lay claim to universal knowledge, to recognise no limits to its dominion, and to ignore those which outlie it. Hence the too frequent tendency of ages of scientific discovery to narrow the horizon of thought, to bring it within the lower sphere of things, so as to spare itself the humiliation of acknowledging that above and beyond all the known, stretches the region of the infinite and the divine. Thus by a singular contradiction, an inordinate ambition leads to an ignoble limitation of the human faculties. It is not then the progress of science which threatens faith in the supernatural, but the insensate infatuation of some of its votaries,—a thing as wholly distinct as is wild enthusiasm from rigorous logic.

The fact remains, however, that under the shelter of this kind of scientific frenzy, naturalism has entrenched itself strongly, not only in the domain of the natural sciences, properly so called, but even in that of philosophy. It is a swelling flood, which carries along on its rapid tide every one who abandons the terra firma of moral truths. It behoves us to examine carefully into its sources, and to trace its transformations in our own time.

At the commencement of the century it makes its first appearance in the magnificent and poetic pantheism of Schelling; *he affirms in* brilliant utterances the identity of natural and

spiritual order, clothes with delusive images a determinism as positive as that of Spinosa, and holds up again to the dazzled gaze the mirage of a false infinite, which does not in reality pass the bounds of the world of natural phenomena. Hegel gives it its most perfect form; he pretends to find in human reason the very formula of the absolute, which is not distinct from the created world, but develops itself through universal life, in an evolution regulated by fixed laws, of which logic shows us the sequence. Thus from kingdom to kingdom in nature, from sphere to sphere in human existence, from era to era in history, the absolute reveals itself, ever more perfectly, till it arrives at the full consciousness of itself, as the idea of all things in the reason of man. There, on the highest step of metaphysical abstraction, is its icy throne, from which it descends incessantly to recommence its eternal evolution, under the impulse of that famous dialectic method which brings negation out of affirmation, and from their repeated collision evolves new categories, to be themselves again carried along in the vortex of a ceaseless development. Thus is the woof of the universe and of our destinies woven under the hand of an inflexible logic more weird and wan than the ancient Fate; thus does our world revolve upon itself, tightly bound within its own limits, for its totality constitutes the absolute; there is nothing beyond it; it is at once divine and circumscribed; there is not left one fissure, small or great, through which free action might pass athwart the dialectic network which shuts it in. Sound to the depths of this philosophy; you will find no other element; it has been able, for a time, to make an illusive show to superficial observers by employing Christian symbols; but the fatalistic and naturalistic idea, which is its essence, has not succeeded in confining itself within a mould too narrow for it; it has broken it, and Feuerbach spoke candidly when he repudiated resolutely the notion of religion. The learned structure of Hegelianism was soon abandoned; it cost too great an effort to the modern mind, and especially to the mind of France.



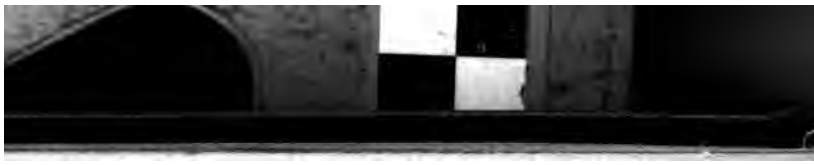
This pantheism of the idea, with its ingenious method and bold deductions, was quickly cast aside, but the influence of the system remained no less considerable. The school of Hegel first taught that the absolute is not beyond this world, and then that this ever self-evolving absolute absorbs into itself the most flagrant contradictions, and dwindles to the eternal relative. Hence fall all marked distinctions between *the false* and *the true*, between good and evil; they are not; they arise only to be incessantly unmade and remade, for there is no fixed type of the true, the beautiful, the good, since there is no God. Moral freedom is crushed under the grinding wheels of system. Hegelianism, thus vulgarised and despoiled of the deep and hardy speculations which made its grandeur, has crept into our intellectual atmosphere; we trace its influence in the principal sections of the naturalistic school, which is only unanimous in rejecting peremptorily the idea of supernatural order. Thence proceeds that scepticism of the scoffer or the atheist, which is ever repeating that everything is relative, that we are but a shadow projected on the eternal illusion. It is graceful truly in those who have reached this negation of thought, to assume a position of proud superiority and to dispense their scorn, as if there were in all the world of intellect a situation more miserable and pitiable than theirs.

Positivism is only a less agreeable form of this scepticism. It also, by its elimination of causes from the world, and primarily of free and moral causes, has retained the great lesson of Hegelianism, that the absolute does not exist beyond the finite; it thence concludes that there is nothing reliable but outward fact, that metaphysics is but a *mirage* of the mind, a dangerous relic of theology; it supposes itself to have discovered the essential order of things because it presents a new classification of the sciences; it affirms with startling audacity that all which does not come under this classification has no existence; consequently, neither conscience, nor the sense of the divine, nor *the inextinguishable* thirst after moral and religious truth—at

once the rack and the glory of the human soul—have any right to be; a creed which does not prevent it, nevertheless, from mocking our highest needs with I know not what ridiculous worship of humanity, upon which the present adherents of the school voluntarily preserve a prudent silence. In vain does a noble and vigorous mind essay to re-conquer from positivism the realm of metaphysics, while yet maintaining that the absolute has no personal existence; he arrives only at an ideal which is the contrary of the real, which vanishes when he would give it life, which only *is* on condition of *not being*, so that the first article of this strange theodicy might be defined thus: God is the opposite of Being; He is a pure abstraction. The spiritualism of M. Vacherot is only distinguished from positivism by a sterile good intention, for with him the category of the ideal is confounded with that of the nonexistent.

It is not easy to grasp the Hegelian atheism amidst the sensibilities, the lyric and mystic effusions, the prayers to the Celestial Father, which abound in M. Renan's books; but beneath the unction of this surface is soon perceived the hollow void, the abyss whence we have emerged, the impersonal ideal of which the name of God is a heavy and vulgar translation. He has taken pains to come forth from the gilded cloud in which he chooses to enwrap himself with such words as these. "The historical sciences are based on the supposition that no supernatural agent comes forth to trouble the progress of humanity; that there is no free existence superior to man, to whom an appreciable share may be assigned in the moral conduct, any more than in the material conduct of the universe. For myself, I believe that there is not in the universe an intelligence superior to that of man; the absolute of justice and reason manifests itself only in humanity; regarded apart from humanity, that absolute is but an abstraction. The infinite exists only when it clothes itself in form."* Here is something definite. Since his preface to the translation of Job, it has been well

* "Revue des Deux Mondes."—1860, p. 383.



known that the immortality of the soul means for M. Renan nothing more than the beneficent memory left by a noble life upon humanity, Morality, like the rest of religion, is confounded with æsthetics, and the worship of the beautiful is the only serious worship. M. Taine, the brilliant rival of M. Renan, professes naturalism with infinitely more simplicity; he does not embarrass himself either with Hegel or with the ideal; he returns to the sensualism of the eighteenth century, stripping Condillac of his periphrasis.

It was needful to show on what system of philosophy the supernatural is in our day eliminated with so much boasting; nothing better proves to what an extent it is bound up with the most elementary principles of theism. We will content ourselves with just recalling these principles to our antagonists, maintaining that they themselves demand from the reason far greater sacrifices than any required by the profounder mysteries of religion.

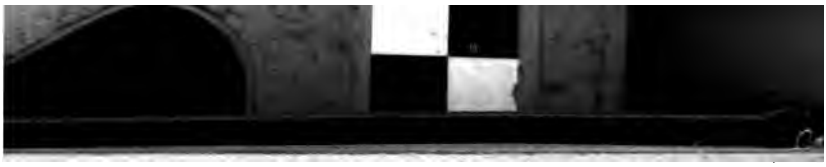
To the positivists who not only reject such or such solution of the metaphysical and religious problem, but who suppress the problem itself, and not content with denying supernatural order, forbid it to intrude on the mind, we reply: You, who pretend to explain all which is observable to man in this world, are not consistent with yourselves; you do not carry out your programme, for unless you recognise as positive fact only that which is sensible and tangible, you cannot deny that there is in humanity as well in our days of civilisation as in mythologic ages, an all-puissant instinct which urges man to seek a moral satisfaction beyond the temporal and finite, an unconquerable aspiration towards that which is eternal. There is no fact more positive than the religious sentiment. In the eloquent words of M. Guizot, "You may interrogate the human race in all time and in all places, in all states of society and all grades of civilisation, and you will find man everywhere and always, believing spontaneously in facts and causes beyond this sensible world, this living mechanism called nature."*

* "Méditations sur la Religion," p. 95.

Positivists, ye men of the outward fact, here is a positive fact, which, of all the rest, has exercised the weightiest influence on the destinies of our race; here is a fact universal and incontestable, appreciable not only in the individual but in the race, and you take no account of it. In vain you seek to substitute it with "*the astonishment of feeble and thinking humanity plunged into the immensity of the universe.*"* This "feeble and thinking humanity" soars perpetually beyond this immense universe seeking its God; your attempted substitution does not avail, and the fact remains unexplained, or rather set aside and denied by you. Strange positivism that, which gives no place in science to the human yearning which has worked most mightily on history, and has troubled and agitated the race to its depths, not like a passing wind which swells the waves, but like that mysterious law which day by day heaves the whole heart of ocean. Positivism rejects supernatural and divine order, on the pretext that it is *without* the world; and behold, this supernatural order invades the world itself, at least by the passionate longings which it excites, and thus asserts its right to be placed in the category of appreciable facts to be verified and explained. The school of fact is thus unfaithful to itself, and it is not needful in order to establish its insufficiency, to invoke the rights of soul and conscience which it ignores; it is enough to prove to positivism that it sets aside the positive facts which fetter it, and thus is untrue to its own method.

To re-conquer moral and divine order from pantheism, we appeal to the numerous and weighty facts which are not compatible with the explanation given by it of the universe. This explanation is found in all its systems, however worked out, propped up as they may be by dialectics imposing as those of Hegelianism, or invested with the elegance of our literary metaphysicians; in all comes out the declaration, that nature is self-sufficient, that it is not the work of an intelligent, personal

* "Cours de Philosophie Positive," par Auguste Comte. Nouvelle Edition. 1864. Préface par M. Littré, p. 26.



cause, distinct from the world itself, and finally, that there is no place in universal life or in history for moral freedom. Material order is everything. Hence the impossibility of admitting supernatural order. Well, but what if the science of nature, metaphysics, and conscience give the lie to this solution which only appears satisfactory because it suppresses all that would embarrass it?

The science of nature in its wide and mighty current sets aside the hypothetical systems which have essayed to endow matter with the faculty of transforming itself and originating life. Neither the theory of natural selection, nor that of spontaneous generation has been able to stand the test of a close and impartial examination. Nature presents herself to us ordered upon a uniform plan; she forms a living ladder upon which existences are disposed by ranks, but in such sort that they cannot of themselves raise themselves from one step of the ascending line to another—nay more, each species supposes a creative act. A plan marvellously wise is unfolded in the general arrangement of the series, and the hand of the Creator appears in each new link.* The work cannot, then, be confounded with the worker, since nature is powerless to pass alone the space comprised between any two species. It follows that even into the domain of necessity shines the light of the moral world—the world of freedom and of mind. Matter only arrives at life and organisation under the action of a free and spiritual cause. "The perfections of God are clearly seen in creation."

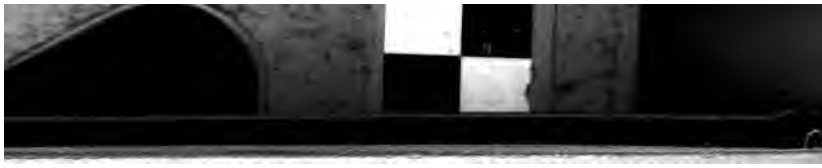
Further, spirit itself appears in the world not simply in the impress of intelligence and goodness which is reflected even in the lower organisms, but again in a direct manifestation—I mean in man. Here is thought, here is reason, here is moral life. Having never succeeded in bringing a bird from a reptile, a mammal from a rodent, how shall we suppose that man is developed from the lower animals? Not a single fact

* *See M. Janet's* work on "Le Matérialisme Contemporain."

has been successfully adduced in support of this abject hypothesis. "From all bodies together," says Pascal, "you cannot draw one thought." How should spirit be born of matter? The appearance of life in the inorganic world was a new fact, or to speak more correctly, an act of creation, for it could not leap from the insensate stone like the spark from fretted pebbles. The appearance of animal life was equally a new act, for plant never gave forth other than vegetable life. Surely from the life of the animal to that of the spirit, the leap is more wide and sudden still, and creative energy must have manifested itself with greater glory to produce this higher form of life, or rather to reproduce itself in it. Thus it is that without having recourse to the brilliant tablets of earth and sky, by which we are wont to be led from the admiration of a work so perfect to the adoration of its Author; without invoking from the shining day and starry vault, that triumphal hymn to the Creator of which the sweet singer of Israel wakes for us an echo; without appealing to poetry—less false than the vulgar prose which, while it assumes to banish the false ideal, banishes the true idea of all things—it is enough to invoke the science of nature, in order to recognise even in this lower realm, the great, free, mighty cause which we call God. Supernatural order has set its seal on the natural which, without it, would have no existence.

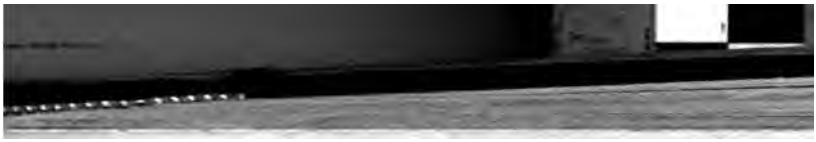
The science of metaphysics is not less opposed than that of Nature to the pantheistic idea. First, reason refuses to admit that the perfect and infinite of which it has the conception, can be inseparably bound to the imperfect and the finite, that the imperfect and finite form part of God Himself!* For if it is objected that the distinct existence of God is a limit to absolute being, and consequently takes away that character of infinitude which theism attributes to Him, we reply that there are two conceptions of the infinite—one which confounds it with the

* See on this subject the able remarks of M. Jules Simon in his book on "La Religion Naturelle."



totality of things and beings, and which destroys in the very process of stating it; another which makes it consist in omnipotence, omniscience, independence of all which is relative and incomplete, in the intensity and plenitude of being and not in its extension, in one word, in perfection. If God, after having created the world contingent and finite, remains without and beyond it, His will is none the less absolute; beside and before Him are only the creatures whom He has been pleased to call into life. Hence the essence of being is will.* But this is just the redoubtable metaphysical difficulty over which pantheism stumbles. It recognises no cause free and transcendent to the world, to nature, and history. For it, there is no other absolute than the universe arriving at the consciousness of itself in our reason. But evidently, universal life does not begin with this highest form; it does not open with thought, which is rather like the flower of this vast development, for it is not the cause of it, but the product. That which is at the starting point, at the origin of things, is not the idea, not mind, but abstract being—an existence so vague as to be akin to non-existence. Thus the greater results from the less, life from death or from inertia; the immense column of universal existence springs from sheer nonentity. For what, in definite terms, is the abstract Being of Hegelianism, or that fathomless abyss, whence the universe is made to arise, if it is not nonentity? Thus the famous axiom, *Ex nihilo nihil* cannot be applied to Christians, or to the spiritualistic philosophers who place absolute being before the world, but it falls with its whole weight on the systems of pantheism. It is idle to suppose myriads of centuries bringing forms of existence out of this nonentity; time as has been well said, has nothing to do with the question. Millions of years cannot make fruitful that which has itself no existence. Behold then, a grand and gorgeous effect—the world with its harmonies, humanity with

* See "Les Philosophes Contemporains," by M. Eugène Poitou, *and* "*L'Idée* de Dieu," by M. Caro.



its highest life, born not even of Thales' drop of water, but of a void! Reason protests against such a doctrine, and to accept it, she must needs deny the principle of causality which is one of her essential elements.*

The moral consciousness protests yet more loudly; it could not survive the suppression of Divine order. It affirms it with authority, every time that it enjoins the right on us, and upbraids us for the wrong; for what it commands is often that which we have no will to do, and what it condemns is that which our inclination has prompted. It is not, then, the simple echo of our hearts; it speaks in the name of a law, which is neither that of our senses, nor of our mobile and impassioned soul; it brings us into the presence of another than ourselves, of one greater than ourselves, who has an absolute right over us, and its "*Thou shalt*" sounds yet above the wrecks of all our other convictions, establishing in us an immovable certitude. The *categorical imperative*, to employ the manly language of Kant, is the rock on which rests the whole moral life of individuals and of societies, and which sophistical speculation has no real power to fritter away, even when it pretends to have ground it to powder. The metaphysician who has ignored conscience is compelled to lean on it every instant; so soon as he relaxes his watchfulness over himself, he returns to instinctive and universal beliefs; and every time that, in view of crime or treachery, he utters a cry of indignation, he acknowledges that moral order which he has sought to confound with the order of necessity. Yes, the human soul believes in liberty, in responsibility, in law, and its sanction; man believes that there is something which is the good, the true, the right, and some one who enjoins this upon him, renders it possible to him, and watches over its accomplishment. Pantheism, applied truly and upon a large scale,

* See the noble remarks c. 5 in "La Raison et le Christianisme," of M. Charles Secrétan, and the Lectures of M. Naville on "La Vie Eternelle."



even by its best representatives, would cover with a plenary indulgence all infamies, would unchain wholly the powers of evil, and render life impossible. It would find its most terrible refutation in its very application, which would be the daring negation of right and duty, the justification of every deed done, a sort of *natural selection* carried on in the bosom of humanity, for the benefit of the violent and the froward; it would be the reign of force over a servile and degraded race. Thank Heaven, this frightful *reductio ad absurdum* of pantheism is not needful; even should all the tribunals which rest on the idea of responsibility and of justice be abolished, the inward tribunal would still remain; conscience would lift its voice to attest that the human race is not mistaken in believing that good is not another name for evil, and evil another name for good; that the will is not a spring moved by the law of necessity; that responsibility is real and earnest, and that freedom, far from being an illusion, is the perilous and glorious gift bestowed by Him who created man in His own image. Everything within us proclaims His being. I ask no other proof of it than those unquenchable aspirations, that need of an infinite love, that boundless void which nothing avails to fill, that holy agony so admirably expressed by the inspired Hebrew, who spoke for the whole race when he cried, "My soul thirsteth for God!"

Contemporary pantheism has against it not only all that is elevated and noble in the human heart, but also the abject position to which it is sinking so rapidly in Germany and France. As we have already shown, the most outspoken materialism is its natural successor and its legitimate scourge; it cannot long remain on the steep declivity where it is placed by its negation of a personal God, and of Freedom; its false and artificial idealism yields quickly to sensualism. It is enough in our days, in order to refute those who have made of man the sole God of the universe, to set against them those who, with M. Taine, make him "the human beast." "Man," says he, "is an

animal, save in exceptional moments; blood and instinct are his guides; necessity lashes and the beast goes forward—the moral translates the physical." And this cynical and unblushing materialism walks as proudly as if it were not a blot on the generation which retrogrades to it!

It has been a hundred times victoriously refuted; it has been called upon to explain how matter, which we know only by our perceptions, that is, by the exercise of our mind, should be found to have greater certainty than that mind itself, which is not only the first organ of knowledge, but also its most direct object. It is notorious that while the corporeal existence is undergoing a perpetual process of renovation, molecule by molecule, mind preserves its identity. If a close correlation between the manifestations of thought and the physical organs, which serve as its instruments, cannot be denied, this correlation is never in an exact proportion to its development.*

Let us then have it explained how the molecules which enter day by day into the corporeal organism can suddenly be invested with spiritual qualities, which they did not before possess; how, from the atom, ever divisible and finite, there should come forth the thought which has none of its attributes; how, if there is nothing beyond the physical, the influences of the moral on the physical are as indisputable as are the inverse influences; how, finally, two orders of facts, often in contradiction, are to be brought into a factitious unity. But materialism is not a doctrine, it is a ditch into which fall the spiritually blind; it is the shallows which engulf the pretended philosophers, who, having first denied God in heaven, next deny Him in man. The insoluble mystery is, that souls enamoured of liberty, should be found to applaud this shameless sensualism, which counts in our day so many adherents. Such a mental condition reminds us of the prophecy of a philosopher at the beginning of the century, "Our age will become so cultivated

* See M. Janet's article "Le Cerveau," in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," June and July, 1865.



that it will be as ridiculous in its eyes to believe in God as it is now to believe in ghosts. Then shall the sweat of holy conflict be dried on every brow. Then shall tears of lofty aspiration fail to every eye; nothing but ringing laughter shall be heard among men, for reason will have reached the term of its work, and humanity attained its goal."*

Let us hope that many misguided spirits will recoil finally from a theory, which makes humanity emerge from the steaming sloughs of chaos only to return to them again. All whose dignity it hurts to be the descendants of monkeys, will recognise what a price is paid for the surrender of supernatural order, and will return to it in the name of science, and of conscience, as to the sole adequate explanation of the enigma of the universe.† The advocates of freedom will remember the cruel lessons of history, and whoever owns a deadly disgust with the era of the Cæsars, will repel with indignation the abject philosophy which gave it birth, remembering that, as has been said by a great publicist, "There is a sure and secret understanding between materialism and despotism."

II. Refutation of objections made to the Supernatural from the Theistic point of view.

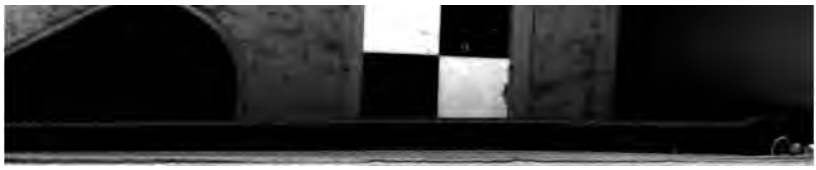
It follows from the preceding considerations that those historians of Jesus, who, in the name of pantheism, have at the outset dismissed the supernatural, without discussion and without examination, have started with an *à priori* thesis which they have not made good. We have the right to maintain, in opposition to them, the existence of a divine order, beyond and above nature, which we may call the supernatural order. This once recognised, we cannot beforehand limit its action and intervention in nature, and it is logical to admit, at least,

* Lichtenberg. "Vermischte Schriften," I, p. 166.

† Since these pages were written, M. Ernest Naville has published his beautiful work entitled "Le Père Céleste." It is needless to observe how entirely I am at one with him.

the possibility of miracle. Here the theistic school arrests us, and while admitting with us this divine order, pretends to dispute the possibility of miracles, in the name of the very perfection of order, which implies the immutability of the laws of the world. It is to this objection that we proceed now to reply. It will not embarrass us much.

It is necessary first to come to an understanding about these laws. Does science permit us to confer on them an absolute value? Are they other than formulas designed to generalise the sum of facts hitherto established? It is well to be careful not to overpass the bounds of certainty, possible in this region. Beyond this, the greater or less fixity of these laws matters little. There are other laws, the immutability of which is evident in quite another manner; I allude to the very conditions of the divine life. Absolute being, precisely because it is absolute, distinct from the world, is sovereignly free and independent. Now, if in creating the world it had alienated its own liberty, enchained its independence by the very laws which it is supposed to have given to nature, it would follow that the divine order must have been profoundly shaken and changed; the immutability of natural laws would involve the transformation or rather the perturbation of the supernatural order which is the order of absolute freedom. Divine sovereignty recognises no limit in the order of nature, which is the order of necessity. If the creation limited its author, He would be enclosed and enchained by it, and theism would be definitively compromised. Therefore has Nature been so organised as to be in no wise closed against new interventions of divine power. Have we not marked the trace of successive acts of creation in the various ranks of beings, which followed each other up to the appearance of man? And is not this appearance itself the great miracle of creation? What is there to hinder creative power from manifesting itself anew for the realisation of its designs? Above the special laws of nature, is the law of natural life itself, which consists in absolute



dependence upon God for its maintenance. The worst of disorders would be the abrogation of such a law. The choice, then, is between the invariable fixity of the laws of nature and the maintenance of the divine sovereignty.

It is of no avail to bring forward the immanency of God in nature; we grant that we live and move in Him; but it is one thing to believe in His incessant operation, and another to identify Him with natural laws, as if the law of gravity or of electricity were the necessary mode of His existence. Such a conception of immanency leads straight to pantheism, and implies the confusion of the Creator with the creation. If it is objected that we ourselves impair His absolute sovereignty by admitting that He has created beings in His own image, whose freewill He respects, we reply that these beings belong wholly to another domain than that of nature, and that it has pleased God to exempt them from the passivity which characterises the lower orders. Besides, it is from him that they hold this liberty, in which He respects His own creative will, and He has in nowise bound Himself not to act directly upon them and to interpose in their moral history, while ever maintaining in the mode of His action the marked distinction between moral order and the order of nature.

What, then, is this talk about the overthrow of natural laws? No one disputes that God is exalted, in virtue of His omnipresence and omniscience, above all the laws which limit created beings, by the revolutions of time, and the divisions of space. Why should He not be as independent of other natural laws as of these? More than this; moral and free agents modify ceaselessly the application of natural laws; they combine and utilise them so as to call forth from them new effects, which would not be produced by their habitual and regular action; it may be even said that they suspend them in their operation. When my hand throws a stone high in air, it withdraws the stone for a moment from the law of gravity, which *nails it to* earth or attracts it thither. Thus is it in a multitude

of indifferent actions. What shall hinder me from admitting that the absolute Being, who holds in His Almighty hand the keyboard of all the forces of nature, the known and unknown, may draw from it chords which pass our calculations? Hence it follows that miracles which suppose the combination of natural forces, known or unknown, have nothing in them in opposition to nature's laws. We go further; we admit absolute miracle, that is, the direct manifestation of the creative power without a medium. There is nothing impossible from that point of view of theism which recognises a free creation, one which is not simply the organisation of eternal matter. Are the laws of nature violated because a fact is accomplished by the direct exercise of divine power? Must the vine needs be withdrawn from the laws of vegetable growth because, at Cana, water was once changed into wine? Must the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves hinder the sown earth from bearing, that year, its harvest? No general law then was violated; it would be otherwise if it was established that divine power could not have produced such effects: then it would follow, that it is no more sovereignly free; it would have lost its essential characteristics, and there would ensue a perturbation of the order of the universe of more weighty import than the most amazing prodigy, for—let us not forget it—the supernatural is the freedom of God, and it can only be abandoned, or at least its possibility contested, by abandoning a personal God.*

Theism replies to these considerations by appealing to the wisdom of the Creator. How, it asks, suppose that God, sovereignly wise, has not realised His own idea by the best means, and that He needs to re-touch His work as a poet corrects his verses, because they are defective? The objection would hold if we belonged to the world of necessity instead of to that of freedom. Yes, if the entire creation had

* See, on this subject, the remarks of M. Rothe, in his little work, "Zur Dogmatik," p. 66, and following.



been complete when it issued from the hands of God, and universal life had been meant to flow on an untroubled course between insurmountable banks, a new and extraordinary intervention of divine power could no more be conceived, than the touch of an alien chisel on marble sculptured by Phidias. But, in this sense, creation was not complete; the free creature, man, had to determine his own destiny by an act of will, which implies the possibility of evil being introduced into a perfect work. Thus the divine poem of the creation, to borrow the image of a father of the Church, has been interpolated; the determination to be free has had fatal consequences for man himself and for the earth, which, given to him as the theatre of his activity, has become that of his perpetual chastisement, till he mingles dust with dust. It is not, then, His own work that God has to correct, as if it had been originally imperfect and wanting; it is a helping hand which He holds out to a creature lost and miserable through his own fault. The case is thus stated in far different terms; the divine wisdom is not the point in question.

If the fall of mankind is disputed, we answer that, short of an optimism as superficial as it is untenable, it must be impossible to contest its misery and degradation. To all whose eyes are not blinded, man appears a being fallen and debased. He has his joys, his grandeurs and gleams of nobility; his miseries are the miseries of a lord of creation; he is not a parvenu animal, but a being celestial and divine fallen from his high estate, and still mindful of it. In spite of spring with its smile, and youth with its enchantment, in spite of short felicities and glowing dreams, we see the race panting under its load of suffering, till one by one its children yield up their breath in a last agony. For the majority of men, existence is one long battle with hunger, in protracted ignorance and thankless labour. Bread is a conquest always dearly bought. To all death is preceded by a long procession of bodily ills, *and to some it* appears almost a remedy, so has their life been

smitten and wounded. One mighty groan has been rising for six thousand years from this earth, watered with sweat and tears. It is, as says the poet, the voice of men who weep; they curse the day when they were born, every time that a new stroke of destiny recalls them to the poignant verity of their situation. Doubtless, in the midst of all these woes, the chariot of progress advances, but there are stains of blood on its wheels, and we know but too well what it crushes in its course. Vain is it to seek for it a smoother road; it must ever leave each generation on the sepulchral field, in which the fairest discoveries of science cannot smooth a single furrow. Side by side with the sorrows of mankind are its crimes, its basenesses, explosions of hatred, fevers of voluptuousness. It is not needful to multiply deeply-coloured pictures, or to track far the miry, bloody course of history. Is not the destructive force ever being unchained among men, let loose by themselves, and ever equally terrible whether assuming the guise of pleasure causing death, or that of hatred enkindling fratricidal war? Without widening our horizon, it is enough to contemplate the crimes of one single city—the most brilliant let it be, and the fairest to the eye—and to remember what one single night there covers with its wings! It is enough to lift that other veil, not less dark, which hides the life of each man, to descend into the depths of one's own being, and to own courageously to oneself that which none would confide to dearest friend.

If *this* was the normal state of humanity, if *this* the primal work of God, what, then, is that God? and why guard with so anxious a care a wisdom so cruelly belied? The Christian solution which places at the source of history, a terrible falling away of the moral creature, appears to us, notwithstanding its mystery, alone compatible with the conception of a God holy and free. Original sin opened the world to evil and to sorrow; and it is only too certain that both are ceaselessly renewed by hereditary influence. This is a fact that can only be denied



with the denial of evil itself, and with it of good, of God, and of moral order. All the explanations of evil given by deism, fall before a rigorous examination; they are forced to palliate it, to reduce it to being only a privation of the absolute, the necessary condition of the creature; they finish always by making it something natural and simple, to be softened down as far as possible, and thus they fling a roseate tinge upon our heavy shadows. But none the less does the malignant power carry on its ravages in the heart of humanity, which, incapable of exorcising, ceases not to curse it. And were all outward forms of suffering removed, the soul would raise to heaven a yet more despairing cry, because she would then be devoted wholly to the inward torture, consumed by the thirst after righteousness and the infinite; like Rachel, she will not be comforted because her God is not, or rather because she is no more her God's. All great poetry is in its essence the poetry of sorrow.

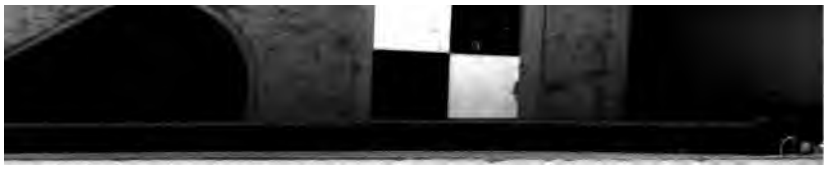
Vain is it, as Plato beautifully expresses it, to seek to banish from man's memory the time when, in the light, he celebrated the divine mysteries; he remembers that he is of the race of God; therefore he is inconsolable. This incurable regret, mingled with an ardent though indefinite aspiration, is at the foundation of religion as of art. It is to be traced in the fables of all the ancient religions. All unite in proclaiming that primitive natural order has been overthrown, not by deed of God, but by deed of the estranged moral creature, and that it has become an order against nature. Thenceforward the supernatural is only the restoration of true nature, a return to the really natural order; it loses thus all semblance of arbitrariness.

If the fall is but a delusion, if evil is only the imperfection necessary to the harmony of the whole, I can understand the objections of the deist to miracle. But if it is true, that God's free creature is unhappy through his own fault, and has placed *himself under* the yoke of a calamity as tremendous as it is

terrible, in the name of what principle can those who recognise a sovereign Deity set aside the supernatural? After all, miracle, which must not be regarded exclusively in its secondary manifestations, is nothing else than the intervention of the divine freedom to save man, conformably with the laws of moral order. What? You admit that God is free, is master of the creation which He called out of nothing, and yet to this free God you deny the right to arise from His rest to restore His fallen creature, because, to this end, He must needs break the chain of cause and effect, and introduce a novel fact in history? But if He cannot save, how could He then create? Creation is apparently an act of love which reveals the depth of His being. If you question His sovereign right to save His creature when fallen from happiness, you refuse Him that which is the very essence of His being; you impugn His moral immutability, which must be in no wise confounded with immobility or inertia. The supernatural is, then, not only the freedom of God, it is also His love. I know no other definition of it more rigorously exact. Of what avail would His freedom be to God, in the sense in which it is accorded by theism, if He were unable to use that freedom for good?

God is not dependent on natural order. Let it, then, be admitted that nothing is more conceivable than His sovereign intervention in that order, to restore it when it has been overthrown. What more untenable, in good logic, than the inconsistent theism which admits a free Deity, but forbids Him to use His freedom, and compels His wisdom to restrain His love? Such a system must either ascend or descend; its only refuge is above itself in Christianity, which alone realises fully its high conception of God, or below itself in pantheism, which, suppressing all transcendent and divine order, admits nothing but natural law.

In deism this natural law acts as a sort of *maire du palais*, governing in the name of a *fainéant* king, who is himself



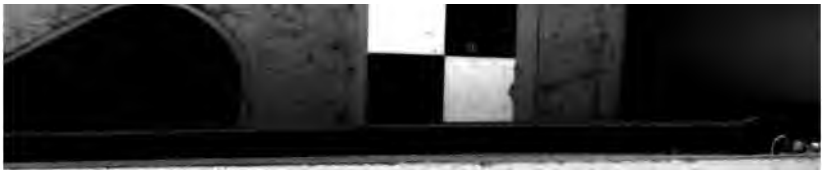
governed by it. There is nothing left but to depose such a sovereign. "*Dandum est Deo*," said Saint Augustine, "*eum aliquid facere posse quod nos investigare non possumus.*" "We must grant that God is able to do that which we are not able to search out."

There is one school more inconsistent still than the deistic; it is that which pretends to give us a Christianity without miracles, and seriously maintains that the supernatural is an indifferent element in the religion of the Gospel. Such is the confusion of spirits in our day, that theologians are to be found who, repudiating overtly the notion of a personal God, yet make use of the name of Jesus Christ. When the Church shall have enlarged her borders wide enough to enclose these, there will cease to be a Church, for she will then have cast away that which has hitherto made her a society of Christians. The deists who claim to belong to her, and whom we are far from confounding with pantheists, do not less misconceive her distinctive character. Since miracles, or, to speak more properly, since marvels have been made to give place, as conclusive proof, to moral evidence, they conclude that the supernatural is of no importance in the Christian creed. The conclusion is singular, since miracle, instead of being simply the proof of religion, is its very subject. Christianity rests entirely on the idea, or rather on the fact, of the supernatural intervention of divine love to save a ruined world. When the doctrine of the fall and that of redemption have been taken away, and the system of the simple development of human nature, reaching its perfection in Jesus Christ, has been substituted for them, the very foundation is sapped. Christianity is bound up with the folly of the supernatural, and with it must either conquer or fall. To attempt to maintain it, while robbing it of this its truly characteristic feature, is to introduce intolerable anarchy into the world of thought. Our Christian deists are but timid representatives of the tendency we have been withstanding; *they are bound* to Jesus Christ only by a memory which,

respectable as it may be, will not be able to hold its ground against the deeper elements of their creed—a creed which is at the farthest pole from the Gospel.

The conclusion of this chapter then is, that the modern historians of Jesus have unjustly set aside at the outset the notion of the supernatural. We have established its possibility against pantheism, which only repudiates it because it denies God; and against deism, which in rejecting it, is false to its own principle of divine liberty. There is no justification, therefore, for the *à priori* interdiction of the evidence of our Gospels. We may approach the sources of Christianity without going in quest of abstruse hypotheses, to bring it within the scope of natural order. It is not only this glorious history which is wronged by such a course; it is history itself in its widest acceptation. Let liberty be ignored, whether in God or man, and there remains but the shock of blind forces, or a sort of geometry, producing only abstract formulas, or a veritable natural history, in which physical conditions play the foremost part; fatalism is the universal law, and all the interest and all the morality of the drama disappear. Under the influence of such principles the history of the human race speedily becomes a confused chronicle.

Deism doubtless rises higher than this, but it admits no other combatants than feeble creatures. How far more beautiful and touching is history, when it represents to us the fruitful wrestlings of divine with human freedom, the former striving to assimilate the latter to itself, and to bring about that positive reconciliation, which, embraced in all its consequences, will be the issue of this sublime conflict. I know no thought more elevating, more satisfying than this. God in history, a free God, a God of love, the God of conscience and of the Gospel, God carrying on His own scheme of restoration, *with* man, when man submits to Him, *in spite* of man when he rebels; this is the grand thought which should inspire these studies of history, the purest literary glory of our age. The life of Jesus



then fills its central place as the capital event to which all was tending in the ages anterior to it, and from which all proceeds in subsequent times; it is the very key of the drama, which is neither a miserable farce nor a tragedy without a catastrophe, but the sublime development of a divine thought of pardon and salvation, wrought out through the conflicts and reactions of human freedom.

CHAPTER II.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE PAST.

HISTORY, according to the Christian statement of it, opens with a grand conflict between God and man. The free being, made king of the terrestrial creation, and designed to become its priest, fails under the mysterious ordeal through which he has to pass, in order to learn that he is a free agent, and capable of good and evil. Confounding liberty with the violation of the moral law, forgetting that this moral law is the basis of the higher life, he is untrue to his destiny, and falls under the heavy and degrading yoke of nature. His rebellion has made him a slave, which is the fate of all false emancipation, for the creature cannot exist in absolute independence; either he recognises the moral law, and then is divinely free, or he becomes the victim of his lower instincts and passions. In alienating himself from his Creator, man severed himself from the very principle of life; this fact tells what must be his fate if he is left to himself. Christianity teaches that the free love which had called him into existence, sovereignly interposed a second time to recover and save him. The generous pardon which covers his offence and breaks the fatal and logical sequence, by which death is the issue of evil,—this is the supernatural as apprehended in the very heart of God, at its origin, and in its principle.

But moral life cannot be restored, as it was given, by a simple act of divine omnipotence. God created a free being with a word, but liberty once given cannot be violated even for the accomplishment of the work of restoration; else the restoration would be in reality the annihilation of the moral



creature. It is necessary, then, to bring about, progressively, a new harmony between the human will and the divine, and this harmony will be a reconciliation not only of God with man, but of man with God. God renounces His right to punish, but man must renounce his false claim to belong wholly to himself; he must retract his rebellion, and die to himself to give himself to God. Thus the reconciliation will be a double sacrifice, the divine sacrifice of love which pardons, laying aside the right of irremissible punishment; and the sacrifice of the human heart, which renounces its self-will, breaks or makes itself an offering, penitently confessing past rebellions and accepting all their bitter consequences in the present. Now Christianity tells us that humanity is incapable by itself of this return of holy penitence. Therefore God does not leave it to its own impotence any more than to its condemnation; He acts upon it from without by the stern lessons of life, and by facts which serve as revelations; He acts upon it from within by the mysterious operations of His Spirit; He penetrates it more and more, till at length His eternal Word, life and light of the moral world, descends into it and assimilates it to Himself, so as to be truly its representative. We shall see later what is to be understood by this assimilation, and by the reparative work of which it is the condition. For the present we will content ourselves with saying, that the God-Man is the representative of humanity not only because He took upon Him its likeness, but also because He answers its deepest aspirations; confused and impure in the masses of mankind, these appear pure and luminous in the moral elect, who are in all ages the type of true humanity, I mean of that which alone fulfils its destiny. Hence a patient work of preparation precedes the coming of Christ. It is carried on in two parallel lines, that of direct revelation in Judaism, and that of free experiment in paganism; the point of convergence is the universal expectation of the world at the time of the birth of Christ. It is thus that the Redeemer deserves to be called

the "Desire of all nations," according to the sublime expression of Scripture, which comprises the highest philosophy of history. Such is the Christian statement.

We are not called upon to justify, but simply to present it. It will be admitted that it is lacking neither in grandeur nor in respect for humanity. It does not need long dissertations to establish that it explains, better than any other theory, the history of our race. It alone gives an account of the general facts, universal indeed as humanity, which are found in all the systems of ancient civilisation, and the rudiment of which is discernible even in extreme barbarism.

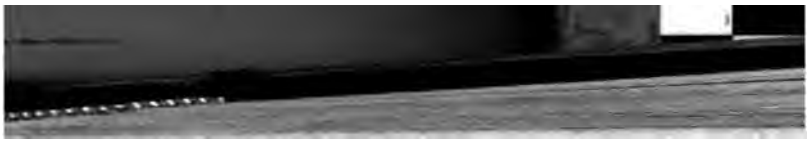
Religion is one of these universal facts; in forms gross or refined, it everywhere rules the life of man; it fashions it to its image, and no impress is to be compared with that which it leaves upon ages and nations. By this name of religion we do not mean simply a collection of beliefs or of ideas about the Deity; religion is above all else an imperious instinct of the soul; a need of the infinite, of peace, of pardon, of consolation, which becomes an anguish, an all-absorbing passion, before it is appeased. It is not born of physical fear, but of the terrors of conscience and the dread of the unknown; it is inspired, primarily, by the consciousness of guilt and pollution, and thus it impels men to sacrifices and purifications. The universal human fact is then not a vague natural religion, consisting of two or three dogmas; it is the passionate endeavour to re-unite the broken link between humanity and Deity; it is the quest of a sufficient atonement and a certain reconciliation with heaven.

The succession or transformation of ancient religions proves the energy of the religious impulse; it is a thirst too intense to be quenched by a few drops of a troubled wave. Each imperfect religion is only a halt in the ardent pursuit of an end ever retreating, for which, however, it is evident that man was made, from his inability to rest short of it. The appearance of art, wherever a new civilisation arises, reveals the same unrest, the same aspiration. According to the



sublime and profound interpretation of Plato, man seeks to forget the cold and meagre reality of things to find the ideal beauty which lives in his memory. All great poetry is a rainbow formed of tears wrung from us by our actual miseries, and rays of glory from our noble origin. Philosophy, especially in the form which it wore in the ancient days of its glory, is the search after absolute truth, lying beyond all theories in which the true and the false are blended; it carries into a graver region the same regrets, the same aspirations which give birth to art. The succession, like the multiplication of schools and of systems, evidences after its manner, the same unalloyed thirst which we have shown in the domain of religion.

Thus we find that man, in conditions favourable to his development, is an essentially religious being, but unsatisfied with his actual condition, ever seeking something better, feeling after a pacified God. Far from finding these aspirations to be dependent on external circumstances, or on the progress of civilisation, we recognise their dimmed reflection even in the lowest religious conceptions. Their birthplace, then, is the soul itself. Man does not lift himself out of materialistic sensualism to the conception of the Deity; such a thought would never be educed from the whole collected body of natural phenomena; man only infuses into these a divine idea, because the idea was previously within him. It may be concluded, from the universality of this divine idea, that it formed part of the primeval treasure of the race; not borrowed from the outer world, it descends from a higher sphere; it comes from God, and leads to Him again. So far from the first rude forms of nature-worship being the foundation of religion, these owe all their sacred character to the pre-existence of religion in the human heart. Assuredly, man fallen so low as to bow to the forces of nature, would never dream of deifying these, if the divine idea were not deeply inrooted, and if it had not at an earlier period possessed him wholly. Natural *religions are only* possible, in the degradation which is their



basis, on the supposition that man lived in the first ages of the world a life so profoundly religious, that even in the depths of his fall, he cannot lose the memory or the need of it.

Side by side with the religious is the moral instinct, the consciousness of obligation, of dependence, of relation to a higher and Divine law—conscience, in short, which convulsed and darkened as it often appears, is nevertheless the very foundation of social life; supposing it wholly absent, neither the relations of family or of state would be possible for a single day. It is at the basis of even the most defective legislation; banish the idea and the feeling of moral obligation, and all human relations become but conflicting elements of disorder. The moral united with the religious sentiment prevents man from living a mere animal existence, from sinking into the sleep of sloth or sensuality; it is a sharp double spur, which urges him painfully onwards in the eager pursuit of pardon and of righteousness. Man is then evidently placed under conditions most favourable to the work of restoration, and to be persuaded of the possibility of his recovery, it is enough to hear his plaint, and to catch his sigh even from the very bosom of outward prosperity.

This race thus religiously organized has a history; God is constantly acting upon it to prepare it for perfect union with Himself. A single glance over the development of ancient religions reveals this progressive preparation, retarded often by the false steps of the free creature man, but carried forward no less through his experiments and gropings after light in the depths of paganism, than by the direct revelations lodged in the bosom of Judaism.

Here there must be no misunderstanding. The naturalistic school pretends that Christianity was not *prepared* but *born* of the ancient world, that it is the product of its various elements, and as it were the confluence of its streams, so that it can be explained by the simple concurrence or combination of natural causes. Christianity, on the contrary, proclaims itself a divine

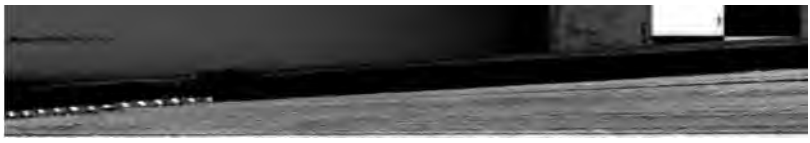


work, a supernatural creation. Against such a claim are adduced the ideas and sentiments of the old world which had some analogy with its doctrine; but it is only just to claim these as on its side, and to find in them a proof in its favour; for if Christianity is not the product of humanity, it is none the less made for humanity, and promises to respond to its inmost needs. If this is the definitive religion, is it strange that there should have been desires after it and presentiments of it? These analogies adduced against it are its points of contact with the race, which it came to raise and save. Doubtless this could not be maintained if it had been preceded by any thing more than a presentiment of the good it brings; if there had been before it a religion or philosophy, which had been able to *give* that which it promised. But there is none such; it is found that the very epoch of loftiest aspiration is that of most radical and degrading impotence. Christianity is then so much the more necessary to the human soul, the more loudly the soul cries out for it by all its aspirations and presentiments. To call up before a fallen race a noble ideal, which yet the race left to itself is powerless to realise; this is the whole work of preparation; for from the moment when man becomes conscious at once of his high destinies and of his utter helplessness, he is prepared to receive the Deliverer.

We may not even attempt to sketch here the history of the religions of antiquity. We will limit ourselves to marking in a few touches, the principal stages of this long voyage of human thought.

I. Historical glance at Ancient Paganism.

When man attempted to raise himself from the depth of the dark deep into which he had fallen, after the mysterious ordeal which precedes and inaugurates history, he began by the worship of nature; unable to raise himself above her, *equally* unable to abjure entirely the divine instinct within *him, he deifies* nature and seeks in one and another of her



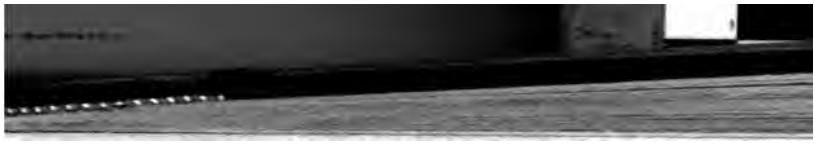
manifestations that higher power on which he feels himself dependent. Now, at the lowest stage of his development, he contents himself with a roughly-hewn fetish; now he adores the unknown power in the sun, which seems to him to pour life and fertility into the earth, or in the moon, which bathes the night with its serene splendours. Under this latter form, completed by a very simple anthromorphism which applies to the gods the law of the sexes, the religions of nature weighed during long ages upon Western Asia. From Babylon to the deserts of Arabia, from Tyre to Carthage, there are ever the same divinities under the various names of Bel and Melitta, of Baal and Baaltis, of Milcarth and Astarte; ever the same confusion of the kindly and severe attributes of nature, ever the same sanguinary and voluptuous worship, mingling murder with prostitution, to celebrate the divinity of birth and death.

Grave, immobile Egypt, by the banks of its sacred stream, under the changeless blue of its sky, enfolds in fables of Asiatic origin, the dream of a dim and uncertain immortality, ever bound to the permanence of the mortal remains. She breathes a new inspiration into the legend of the young god, dead and made alive again, who is no longer Adonis but Osiris. The purely natural symbolism of the rising and falling of the Nile no more contents her; a vague hope glimmers in the pale realm of the dead since Osiris has penetrated it, and there sits enthroned as judge and king of souls. But Egypt goes no further; she only half shakes off the fetters of Asiatic materialism, which revives in her gross symbolism. We rise a step higher with the religion inaugurated by Zoroaster six centuries before Christ; we escape from the incoherent blending of good and evil, which was fatal to the moral consciousness at Babylon: in nature as in human life, a great combat is waged between two decidedly hostile powers; religion is a holy war, and its chief manifestation is through the noble organ of thought,—language, which by prayer ascends to heaven; the conception of immortality and of



judgment becomes more pure. Still this noble religion hovers between dualism and pantheism; it has not truly passed beyond the circle of the religions of nature, for it perpetually identifies moral facts with those which are natural.

The fatal circle of naturalism is completed in India, in the heart of that Aryan race so richly gifted, with mind so subtle and brilliant, which from the most remote ages, has given birth to the metaphysics of pantheism, and pushed it to its farthest issues. When this race awoke to the life of thought, it was at the foot of the Caucasus, where it still clustered in a fresh dawn, under a radiant sky, and by murmuring waters: it saw its gods in the natural phenomena which charmed it; it praised, under the name of Indra, the young and dazzling light; it had hymns for the two first rays of morning, those first-born of the day; hymns, too, for the dew and for the limpid, life-giving stream. Fire is worshipped as the winged being which shines on the hearth, as the golden bird which rests upon the earth, as the sovereign victor who has smoke for his standard. Thus was born in the Vedas that naturalism which had all the freshness and poetry of childhood, and which was the common source whence the Aryan race drew their widely differing religions. While the Gaul and the Teuton, in their sombre forests and under often-clouded skies, are inaugurating a solemn, sometimes even tragical worship, directed to the invisible, tinged with thoughts of expiation and of immortality, and transfused with a consciousness of decay; the Indian race, nursed in the lap of luxuriant and lavish nature, breathes an enchanted life. There it seeks the infinite, and discerns it not in the various manifestations of nature, but in its hidden principle, which is Brahma, and burns to be united to him in the heart of that silent deep, whence streams the flood of universal life. Hence its yearning to be lost in the vague and intangible divinity which is everything and yet nothing, to merge in it the consciousness of *individual* being; hence its ascetism, and that ecstasy,—the *closing utterance* of Brahminism and the opening word of

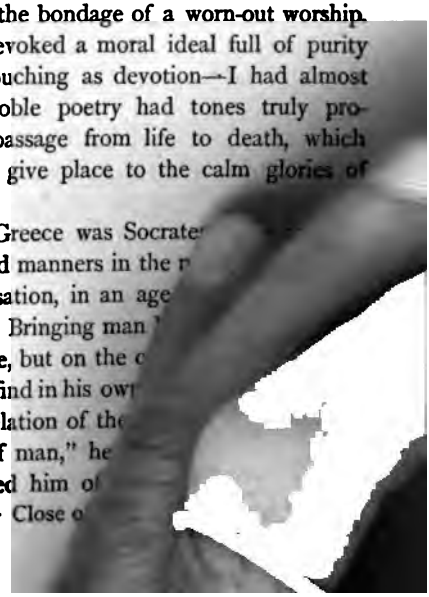


Buddhism—which, with its designs of reformation and purified moral ideas, aims at annihilation, which it calls *Nirvana*, and only breaks the inflexible framework of caste to plunge the whole race into the infinite void. The later developments of Buddhism, the most remarkable of which is the *Trimurti*, or the Indian Trinity, are only varied attempts to realise this absorption of the finite in the infinite and the absolute. The multiplied incarnations of Vishnu, who takes now one human form and now another, like an actor changing his part, denote a strange contempt for moral personality; the sparkling poetry of Hindoo pantheism covers a wide, troubled sea of negations. It is not less removed from Christianity than Asiatic naturalism, and if it appeals to it by its ardent aspirations after the union of the human with the Divine, it presents no other point of contact than this vague sentiment.

Naturalism as it touches the shores of Greece undergoes a transformation; we see it narrowing and contracting the vague lines of its horizon, as it touches that wondrous land, which seems in its very natural conformation, the worthy amphitheatre prepared for heroic conflicts. The idea of symmetrical beauty breathes in its pure harmonious lines, which stand out in all their clearness of perspective in the tender light. It is there, on the shores of that sea of countless creeks, under that heaven brilliant but never burning, that man awakes to know himself as more beautiful, more mighty than the outer world, and makes gods in his own likeness. In place of engulfing himself in an absorbing vortex of deity, he seeks to find *himself* in the object of his adoration; he carves his own idealised image in the marble, and this is his god. The heroic age had lifted him above himself; the god was only a hero placed upon the altar. The Hellenes worshipped themselves in the ravishing types of marvellous beauty. Thus Greece opposes the apotheosis of the heroic to the Indian incarnations, and solves the religious problem in a directly inverse manner, for instead of absorbing the finite in the infinite, she enshrines the divine in a fair but finite form.

It might seem that she was doomed by this wholly terrestrial tendency to an ever frivolous religion. Far otherwise; the divine shines out much more clearly in man than in nature, for he possesses moral life, and in virtue of that, touches the higher sphere. Hence humanism was not solely a religion of artists; the moral element appeared in it with greater power than in any other worship. The conception of the Deity became more pure. The Olympian gods represented not simply passions but virtues. Conscience lifted her voice, and proclaimed "those unwritten laws in which lives a God, who ages not." In Æschylus she fulminated the mysterious anathema, just meed of crime, which hangs over the most fortunate of royal races; she showed, under the brilliant garniture of earth, that blood shed by the murderer's hand which never congeals. She dared even to predict, by the voice of poets, a grand religious renovation, the victory of a young god of the future, whose dart should transpierce Jupiter, and set free the ancient captive of the Caucasus, the faithful image of humanity quivering under the bondage of a worn-out worship. In Sophocles, conscience evoked a moral ideal full of purity and delicacy, grand and touching as devotion—I had almost said as charity.* This noble poetry had tones truly prophetic to represent the passage from life to death, which makes our twilight shades give place to the calm glories of eternity.†

But the true prophet of Greece was Socrate
as a reformer of thought and manners in the r
most active circle of civilisation, in an age
scepticism of the sophists. Bringing man
to intoxicate him with pride, but on the c
his weakness, he led him to find in his ow
of all certainty, and the revelation of th
many myths. "The soul of man," he
the divine." If he reminded him o



* See Antigone. † Close o

immortal destinies, he insisted on the solidarity of the true and the good; he exalted the moral character of learning and the holiness of truth, in an age when philosophy was little more than a frivolous sport. Finally, he lived according to his light, and died for his doctrine. We do not hesitate to hail in him a precursor of Christ; he went before preparing His way, in the midst of much darkness and uncertainty. His teaching, interpreted and expanded by Plato, has become at once the most active solvent of polytheism, and the highest manifestation of the moral idea among the ancients. But in order to hail in this great school even the initiative of positive religion, we must forget its blanks and above all its dualistic errors, so marked in Plato, who could not reach the idea of a God truly free, sovereign of the material; and who finally confounded Him with the abstract and impersonal unity to which he sacrificed all individual rights, and even moral personality itself. This philosophy was powerless to reform Greece; by its Hellenic and aristocratic exclusiveness it voluntarily enclosed itself within the boundaries of a little country, and the limits of a privileged class. The odious theory of the conquest and subjection of the barbarians, the justification of slavery, and even of the slave trade—did not these receive their most exact statement in the system of Aristotle, very few years after the death of Plato? This noble philosophy could indeed reveal better things, but it had no power to deter from the accomplishment of the worse. It blasted the ancient faith, and for the honour of deity it was right; but it substituted for it only a high ideal and a creed incapable of enkindling the heart. Men accepted its negations, and passed by its grand moralities, and the sceptics reappeared, only girded with better armour. Epicurism repeated in its manner the famous maxim, "Know thyself," and conducted man to a merely sensuous life. Stoicism started from the same basis to end in a life of severity, but it never assumed in Greece that austere character which made it so grand at Rome. In vain the troubled soul

fell back upon mysterious modes of worship, which were only a return to the old natural religions somewhat purified; the mysteries of Eleusis, beautiful and touching in their recognition of the immortality of the soul, gave no more real satisfaction than the purifications attached to the worship of Apollo at Delphos, or the hidden doctrines which permeated all the mysteries, and which, under the name of Orphism, revived oriental pantheism. Of all this grand movement of thought, of this civilisation, so versatile and brilliant, the final utterance in the time of Alexander was still the Socratic doctrine; this remained the culminating point of Hellenic development. It was a very elevated ideal, but incomplete and often contradictory; it superseded the popular religion without replacing it, and without making a really powerful impression on souls, on private or public life. It is then a vast exaggeration of the influence and scope of the work of the great master of ancient wisdom, to attribute to him the honour of having laid the foundation of Christianity. On this theory the Gospel must be reduced, as Baur* reduces it, to a mere return to the inner life, and all the weak points of Platonism must be passed over in silence as they are by Strauss.†

The conquests of Alexander had the effect of breaking, in some measure, the narrow mould of nationality, in which till then pagan civilisation had been held. By mingling races and religions, by founding a city which was as a point of junction for the different currents of human thought, he contributed to bring about the new era, in which the great idea of *humanity* should rise above all local distinctions. The conquest of the world by Rome, and the terrible levelling line which she stretched over all the nations that she subjugated, tended to the same end. We do not deny the providential character of these events, which were to facilitate the progress of Christianity, by opening a wider field to its mission; but it must not

* Baur, "Geschichte der drei ersten Jahrh. der Kirche," p. 4.
† Strauss' "Leben Jesu," p. 182.

be forgotten that the idea of the unity of the human race was always very imperfect before the Gospel. It was favoured under paganism, rather by the growing feebleness of the patriotic virtues than by higher and wider views. It is certain that Epicurism, with its desire for repose and its worship of pleasure, corrupted while it softened manners; and while it stifled the fiercer passions, extinguished at the same time the love of country. Humanism, sceptical and voluptuous, was coincident with the loss of liberty, and the oblivion of those manly virtues which had stirred and ennobled public life in the democracies of Greece. It was not so much the recognition of a new and more exalted claim as the weak surrender of perilous obligations.*

Energy and vigour were all on the side of the proud and hardy race, which had patiently pursued its fixed design of conquering the world. We must admit that the Roman people was a strange apostle of the unity of the human race. Its conception of this unity was singular; it held, beyond question, that humanity had but a single head, but that head was to bow under its iron yoke. It aspired to reunite all the nations of the universe, but this aspiration was much more the expression of its vaulting ambition than of its expanded views. When in the Circus, crowded with the Roman populace, the captive Gaul was made to mingle his blood with that of the Teuton and the Parthian, it would be hard to trace, in the brutal scene, the progress of the humanitarian idea. No! not in this school of fierce rapacity and implacable severity could the ancient world learn the great lesson of the moral unity of mankind. That a great spirit, like Cicero, felt a presentiment of the truth, we admit, but this did not prevent the advocate of Sicily, so eloquent against

* See, on all this movement of Greek philosophy, the beautiful book of M. Jules Denys, on "L'Histoire des idées morales dans l'antiquité." Convinced as the author is, that morals had already reached their purest form at this time, his sincerity and learning lead him to admit very important limitations.

Verres, from defending the exactions of which the pro-consul Fonteius had been guilty to Gaul.* The *love of the human race* was a sublime utterance—a lightning gleam in the darkness; but in order to reach the popular conscience, such sentiments needed other exponents than *blasé* Epicureans, implacable conquerors, or half-sceptical Platonists.

A refined philosophy opposes the divine unity to the fables of polytheism; it speaks of the rights of the slave, and makes itself the shield of the feeble and unhappy. The ideal shines out with all the purer radiance for being so foiled by the real. That the games of strength had never been more bloody and terrible, that oppression had never been heavier, and the respect for common superstitions more loosely held, let Cicero be the witness, who made a social necessity of the official observance of the religion of the state, and who concealed himself in the Gardens of Tusculum, in order to express doubts at once bold and prudent.

Thus, on the eve of Christianity, fervent aspirations are rising from the midst of universal impotence and degradation: devouring flames they are, which, having no other aliment, fall back upon the hearts whence they spring, and consume them. Under the load of misery, of tyranny, of scepticism and corruption, which oppresses it, pagan humanity heaves a long sigh of weariness and woe: now it seeks in material pleasures the satisfaction of its infinite craving, and plunges into depths of sensuality, which reveal its blind and restless intensity; now it curses its gods with a sort of frenzy, and rises into an impiety born of despair; or, again, it sits in mourning over that mythology, fair but futile, of which the approaching end is foretold in poetic legends; now, by a secret instinct, it turns its gaze towards the east, asking deliverance from the arts of the magician, or from mysterious oracles, the echo of which has reached it. Thus the commencement of our era is marked by a very peculiar condition of soul, represented in the

* Denys, ii. 44.

literature of the times—a blending of degradation, morbid voluptuousness, effete scepticism, and restless aspiration. This attitude of the spiritual world found its most perfect symbol in the inscription, "*To the Unknown God*," which Paul read at Athens, over one of the countless altars of that idolatrous city. It is not, in fact, a more complete doctrine, but a new divine manifestation that the world is waiting for. We do not deny that some few of the social reforms of the Gospel were faintly anticipated at this time; but of what avail is a floating, cloudy idea which is incapable of transfusing itself into heart and act? What is it, after all, but a distracting ideal invoking a manifestation of power to realise it? The higher the ancient world is lifted in an ideal point of view, without losing sight of its uncertainties and fatal errors, the more palpable is the need for a new religion, which with *light* should bring *strength*.

If we press more closely this ideal, or this aspiration of pagan humanity, we shall see that it goes far beyond the vague intuition of the divine unity or the presentiment of some social reforms. That which the soul asks is a reconciliation between herself and God; it is the restoration of the union between the human nature and the divine. Under the most diverse fables, and athwart gross errors, we discover the same fixed and ardent craving for a great expiation. There is more than this. The idea of a deliverer, of a Messiah, is not less universal. It is found in India, in the legend of Buddha, the saviour-reformer; in Persia, in that of Mithra, the future vanquisher of evil powers; in Greece, in the fable of Prometheus; and in Scandinavia, in that god, mightier than Odin, who is to save the world, and whose name may not be uttered. Thus does the general aspiration of humanity find expression, when freed from all the ancient forms of worship, and when these old faiths were drawing near to each other in a common decay; when to the exultant youth of valiant races succeeded a premature decline, an era of slavery and decadence, though abundant

in material and intellectual riches. The Greco-Roman paganism of this epoch might have used, to express itself in its better tendencies, that mournful utterance of a young Roman: "Tossed from doctrine to doctrine, I was more unhappy than ever; and, carried along by a whirlwind of conflicting ideas, from the depths of my soul I sighed."*

II. The religion of the Old Testament.

A strange people appears in the very centre of the ancient world, a people wholly separated from all which surrounds it; solitary, and yet conscious of a universal mission; the jealous guardian of its religious traditions, and yet with face steadfastly set towards the future. Such is the people of Israel. It has neither the brilliant and metaphysical genius of India, nor the artistic fecundity of Greece, nor the conquering ardour of Rome: it is rude and obstinate; it becomes an object of animadversion as soon as it is known to other nations. And yet it has obtained, in the realm of religion, the pre-eminence which belongs to Greece in the domain of art, and to Rome in that of power. It has conquered mankind, of which it was the scorn, and has cast down before its terrible and invisible God, all those idols of marble and gold, all that graceful and poetic paganism which had flourished in the midst of the most favoured races. Israel, in fact, is devoted wholly to the highest religious idea: take away that idea, and it has no longer power even to guard its own hearths; while, proscribed and exiled, it finds a fatherland on a foreign shore, so soon as the great thought which constitutes its nationality revives within it. The Jew is neither soldier, nor poet, nor philosopher: he is priest and prophet. This is his part in the old world, and it is for this that he is made peculiarly the forerunner, the preparer of paths for the Redeemer. Doubtless, there is to be found moreover that blending of fear and hope which characterises religion before Christ, when it is still a

* "Recognitiones"—(chap. I.)

desire and a quest rather than a calm assurance. The work of preparation consists, as we have seen, precisely in inflaming this desire, and carrying it to the point at which it becomes an intense, urgent supplication, crying out not only for divine succour, but for God Himself, to supply an absolute need. Hence, through all the ages, and all the civilisation of the ancient world, in the midst of ourbursts of evil and violent convulsions of the outward life, that universal language of the human heart, the cry of grief and anguish, the utterance of hope—in a word, all that is most elevated in poetry, in art, and in religious fable. Hence, that universal institution of priesthood and sacrifice, which proves that mankind feel themselves, as a body, afar off from God, and unworthy to approach Him, but that they cherish, nevertheless, the hope of mediation. The existence of a priesthood is the widest and strongest expression of the desire after salvation, for it betokens at once the natural estrangement in which man finds himself from God, and the presentiment of a future reconciliation. Now, this idea of priesthood is the very essence of Judaism, since there is not one of its institutions which does not rest on the separation of a people, chosen from the rest of mankind for the service of the whole race. It realises, therefore, the universal idea of the priesthood; but, in doing so, raises it to a height at which it is freed from all which marred it in the pantheistic and polytheistic religions. Thus Judaism is nothing else than the general religion of the period of preparation, purified indeed and spiritualised, but resting on the same ground of feeling and inspiration as all the other worship of that age. Only, there is a difference so great between the form, which this general religion has assumed in the holy books of the Jews and the degraded forms under which it appears elsewhere, that it is impossible to attribute this superiority to a mere historical and natural development.

We know what the conception of God becomes, in the religions of nature, even in the more refined. Greek humanism

fails to free it from the bounds of the finite: it compromises it in the confused and impure encounter of human passions; and when philosophy tries to release it, it is but changed into an abstract idea without life. What an immeasurable distance is there between the Jehovah of the Bible, and the Indra of the Vedas, the Jupiter of the Iliad, or the God of Pindar and of Plato! From its first utterance Scripture claims dominion over the world of mind by a free creation. God is not the sun, for He made it. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." He is the absolute, the free, the sovereignly wise. Is His majesty terrible? is He called the High and Holy one?—the Father which is in heaven appears with forgiveness even in the midst of terrors. "And God said unto Moses, *I am that I am:* and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I am* hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever."* What metaphysical formula will embrace in fewer words a more sublime idea? The Lord, who calls Himself *I am that I am*, is the God of the fathers: He is Himself the Father who punishes and who protects. The Old Testament throughout is resplendent with His glory, like the sanctuary which Isaiah beheld in vision; in it, too, are heard those voices answering to one another, and crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." The Bible does not reveal to us only the one sovereign God, but also the God of conscience, Him whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, and who yet is "slow to anger," "and pardons abundantly, knowing that we are but dust."†

On the idea entertained of God depends the idea that will be formed of sin and of purification. Whatever, therefore, may be the part accorded to the intuitions of conscience, outside

* Exodus iii. 14, 15. † Psalm ciii.

the bounds of Judaism, it must be admitted that they are invariably coloured by pagan superstition. The natural religions identify moral evil with physical; or, as in the extreme east, they confound it with finite existence itself, so that moral purification is only a magical act, to appease a maleficent power, or a wild asceticism, designed to destroy individuality. Greece, in spite of her fine flashes of light, and noble institutions, knew neither the secret of a worthy repentance, nor of efficient consolation. There can be no comparison between the moral life of Greece and the pathetic drama which is enacted in the conscience of a pious Israelite. The conceptions of the latter of the highest developments of holiness are still very incomplete, but his ideal leaves far behind the best aspirations of the pagan world. The Divine law is his absolute rule, his constant aim, and also his torment, because he measures the distance which separates him from it. He lives in the presence of a righteous God, under the terror of His judgments, but with his whole soul pervaded by a gratitude which can never equal the benefits received. Thus a moral life, deep and earnest, is formed and moulded, a life which is grandest in its sufferings, and in that ardent craving for purification, which finds but an incomplete answer in the sacrifices and holocausts, through which conscience catches a dim glimpse of a definitive satisfaction. At length, in place of vague presentiments, arises a steadfast hope, which illuminates the future with growing splendour.

Whence comes, then, this superiority of the religion of the Old Testament, which is even more striking on the first glance than that of Christianity? Judaism, in fact, by its isolation, rears itself in the ancient world like a steep and solitary summit, while the Gospel extends its empire over mankind far beyond the point where positive faith ceases; for it has permeated with its influence the moral atmosphere which we breathe. Was it on the barren sand of the desert, where he first pitched his tent, that the Shemite read the name of the One Holy God? Can it

be true that it was more easy for him, to lift his soul to the Invisible One from the arid solitudes of Syria and Arabia, than if he had had to rise above the enchantments of a richly gifted land? One might conceive him led by these gloomy wastes into a mournful pantheism; but were they more apt to declare the God of conscience than the starry sky where the Chaldean found only his solar God? The desert is a blank page upon which the soul writes that which she carries within herself; by itself it reveals nothing to man; rather it overwhelms him by its vague, melancholy vastness, which could never originate the thought of a personal God, that is of the Infinite, living and free. If the genius of the race be invoked to solve the problem, we ask how the Hebrew, with a mind far from supple, and without philosophic inspiration, should have been able, at one bound, to leave behind Plato and Aristotle, and all the subtle dreamers of India? Again, if there is one well-attested fact, it is the constant predisposition of the Hebrew to idolatry at the very period when his religion was being developed; he was only held to monotheism by constraint, and needed incessantly the most severe chastisements to bring him back from his idolatries. So soon as he yields to his own bent he becomes a worshipper of Baal, and ten tribes out of the twelve go over definitively to a modified paganism. If, then, his religion comes to him neither from the earth which he treads, nor from the blood which flows in his veins, it must have descended from heaven. We recognise on it the seal of a revelation not given all at once but progressive, adapted to the times, the ignorance and the feebleness of the people who were to be assimilated to it so as to be its guardians. We find then in Judaism, in a purified and spiritualised form, the true religion of the epoch of preparation, of which we have traced elsewhere the crude idea; the general action of God upon mankind at large, is concentrated upon one privileged people, but this concentration itself is for the good of all the other nations, who, along the path of free experiment and by repeated gropings in the dark,

are to arrive at the same point as the chosen race under the discipline of a more direct education.

The election of Israel expresses perfectly the normal relation of man with God before the Redemption, and this great religious fact, which has in it nothing arbitrary, but is founded on the reality of things, is to contribute in an effectual manner to develop that desire after salvation, which is the best preparation for salvation itself. Israel is the priest of humanity in the preparatory period. It is widely separated from all surrounding peoples, enclosed within the land of promise as in a sanctuary, forbidden all unholy intercourse, even more positively by the stern interdictions of its law, than by its high mountain barrier and the inhospitable strand of its coasts.* Still this people, accused of hating the human race, knows that in its posterity all the nations of the earth are to be blessed,† and it is this grand element which constitutes its priesthood. Its moral isolation does not prevent its acting repeatedly on the nations of history with which it comes in contact; thus, despised, as it is, it exercises a considerable ascendancy, especially towards the close of the old world; its influence is like leaven hidden in the universal fermentation of thoughts and aspirations.

The priesthood of Israel is an absolute consecration to a holy God. The chief of the race was called out from his family by a mysterious and sovereign command; he walked among men as a pilgrim without a country, a servant of the most high God, pitching or taking up his tent upon a sign of the Divine will. The sojourn in Egypt, thanks to the cruel persecutions of the Pharaohs, entailed upon the descendants of Abraham no unholy intermingling with the heathen. They came forth from the land of bondage, as they had entered it, ever marked with that strange seal, which is at once their reproach and their glory. Moses, in the desert, impresses this seal yet more deeply upon them by the institutions which he gives,

* Exodus xxxiv. 12. † Gen. xii. 31.

every one tending to bind them more closely to the holy and dreadful God. His law sounded to them like thunder from Sinai, and its terror remained upon them. That law consists not alone in those great general precepts, which raise to such an elevation the moral idea, but in a thousand prescriptions of detail and minute ritual which are to hem them round; it takes possession of their whole life, as well of the most indifferent actions as of the most important, bringing the whole within the scope of a divine consecration. Whether they are celebrating worship or sitting at the family table, whether they are at their ordinary occupations, cultivating their fields and vineyards, or paying funeral honours to their dead; upon every scene breaks a moral reflection like a flash from Sinai; everywhere the law demands that which is not yielded to it, and leaves in its wake dread and repentance. That which appears small and superficial in the legal appointments, is just that which constitutes the unity of this truly sacerdotal life.

The especial priesthood of the family of Aaron is only a delegation of the priesthood of the entire nation, as is evidenced by the offering of redemption which was brought to God on the birth of every firstborn.* The erection of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, the solemn feasts, are all designed to set forth still more prominently the idea of sanctity, by the redoubled consecration, if one may so speak, of the place, and the days in which Jehovah is especially worshipped. The centre of this worship is sacrifice. A deep, conscious need of expiation possesses this people, who are confronted with so stern a law, and who walk under this terrible sentence, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all the words of this law to do them."† Thus the blood of bulls and of goats flows ceaselessly upon the altar of Jehovah, without ever allaying the thirst for pardon, even on the great day of expiation, when, amidst magnificent solemnities, the high priest, not content with the first slain victim, lays the sins of the people on the scapegoat, and sends

* Exodus xiii. 13. † Deut. xxvii. 26.

it into the wilderness. All these purifications were but symbols and types, and served only to arouse and keep awake the want of pardon and of an efficacious sacrifice. Thus did the law, by troubling the conscience, fulfil its stern but salutary mission in the work of preparation.

The grand prophetic thought which is the soul of Judaism is to be found at the very basis of its permanent institutions; these, in fact, incompetent as they are, to satisfy the feelings which they help to foster, can have only a symbolical or typical value. It is needful, however, that this thought should be constantly disengaged from the rites and forms, under which it might else remain buried. Prophecy, properly so called, performs this necessary function. Like the Aaronic priesthood, it is only the more forcible expression of a characteristic which belongs to the entire people. Israel is the great prophet no less than the great priest of the ancient world. It has not only preserved, like other nations, a faint echo of the promise given in Eden; it knows that this promise will only reach its full accomplishment through itself; with gaze turned towards the future, it is in an attitude of mysterious expectation, ever asking itself if the deliverance is not at hand. Each generation clothes the great event in the colours most familiar to it, idealising its own present. A grand hope illuminates the oldest documents of the Hebrew religion; it goes far beyond the temporal benedictions in which it is enwrapped; hence, when these blessings are realised, the waiting soul is in no way satisfied, because the more excellent promise is yet unfulfilled. It is evident, for instance, that after the conquest of the land of Canaan and the multiplication of the race of Abraham, the most glorious of the prophecies made to the father of the faithful is not yet accomplished; all the families of the earth are not yet blessed in Abraham's seed.* Each partial accomplishment of the promises is like the starting-point for a larger hope, which grows in a manner on successive disappointments.

* Genesis xii. 3.

It is thus that prophecy goes hand in hand with history. Vague and general in its beginnings, it is ever tending to greater precision; soon it is not only a deliverance which is looked for, but a deliverer. The hope of Messiah is the very soul of the Old Testament; everything in nature and in history is made to symbolise Him. When, in the breath of spring, Carmel puts on his glory, when the hills, clad in their dazzling vesture, shout for joy, when the fir-tree and the myrtle fling their aroma on the air, when the springs from the hill-chambers carry new verdure into the fertile plains; by such a scene—the full beauty of which can only be appreciated by one who knows the mournful barrenness which goes before it—the pious Israelite pictures to himself the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell when Messiah's great renovating work is done.*

But history has yet brighter gleams to cast upon the future. Each of her periods furnishes a new symbol to represent the divine deliverer. In the most ancient oracles preserved by the holy books of the Jews, when mankind consisted of but a single family, He calls Himself "the seed of the woman," and it is He who is to crush the power of evil.† In the patriarchal age, a child of Abraham is promised, who is to bring deliverance to all the nations of the earth.‡

After Moses, He appears in the aspect of a prophet, like the mighty lawgiver of Israel, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me; Him shall ye hear."§

In the time of the kings, Messiah is to be the King of the future, the ideal David; to Him are applied in a pre-eminent sense all the glorious or pathetic ascriptions with which the royal prophet has filled his psalms, for in the theocracy every event, trouble or triumph, is only an augury and preparation of the definitive era. Every thing in the holy book points to Messiah without the necessity of supposing in the soul of the prophet a factitious double personality, which

* See Isaiah lv. 12, 13.
† Genesis iii. 15.
‡ Genesis xii. 3.
§ Deut. xviii. 18.

would make Him pass, without transition, from the utterance of his own sentiments to that of an impersonal oracle. No; David sang truly his own joys and sorrows, but he, none the less, spoke also in prophetic utterance for that mysterious descendant, who alone was to realise in its perfection, the type of the man of God. In the period which follows the full development of the theocracy under a single sceptre—a troubled epoch in which the worship of Jehovah was often eclipsed, and idolatry and corruption made perpetual inroads upon the chosen people in both its divisions—Messiah is contemplated as the servant of the Lord; the righteous reformer of religion who should restore justice and concord, should put an end to violence, and establish universal peace on a renovated earth.

"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
"The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
"The spirit of counsel and might,
"The spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.
"And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.
" He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes,
" Neither reprove after the hearing of His ears,
" But with righteousness shall He judge the poor,
"And reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.
"And He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth,
"And with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.
"And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins,
"And faithfulness the girdle of His reins.
"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
"And the leopard shall lie down with the kid."—Isaiah xi. 2–6.

He it is, this king who shall reign in righteousness, who is to be "as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." * He shall write the law of the

* Isaiah xxxii. 1, 2.

Lord, not again on tables of stone, but on the heart of the true Israel.* He shall gather all nations and set up His standard in the midst of the people.†

When the rebellious nation is carried into exile, when the long procession of its sons and daughters is led into a strange land, when the captives hang their "harps on the willows by the waters of Babylon," prophecy has but one symbol, as Zion has but one thought—return to the beloved country. "They shall come with weeping," says Jeremiah, "and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble."‡ The second part of Isaiah is a touching and sublime picture of the return of the exiles, but a picture so grand that it plainly embraces a deliverance infinitely greater than that from the captivity of Babylon. In fact, all nations are to share in the triumph of the people of Abraham and of David. Like doves to their windows, they shall flock from all parts of the world, to shelter in the refuge divinely opened for all. The desert which "shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," is not simply the waste land of Judæ; it is the forgiven earth. The daughter of Zion stretches the covering of her tent, and pacified heaven is the pavilion which guards the enlarged family of God. Messiah was given for a witness to all people; he calls the "sons of the strangers," and opens the fountains of life to all who are athirst.§ The visions of Ezekiel no less than the strains of the later Isaiah, compel us to admire the lofty scope of the prophecy of the exile, although they bear the impress of a complicated and clearly Chaldaic symbolism. The prophet insists forcibly on a moral renovation, on an inward change, which is to replace the heart of stone by a heart of flesh. Jeremiah has no more touching tones than these: "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my

* Jeremiah xxxi. 33, 34. † Isaiah xlix. 22.
‡ Jeremiah xxxi. 9. § Isaiah lx.

sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God."* In the whole of the Old Testament there is no broader picture than the vision of the dry bones,—the symbol of the spiritual resurrection of Israel.†

The most important result of this prophetic period is the new feature added to the type of Messiah, the feature of suffering. This deliverer, this king who is to establish the throne in righteousness, will be at the same time that servant of the Lord, who "shall not cry nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street," that gentle Saviour who will not "break the bruised reed," nor "quench the smoking flax."‡ He will be the pure and spotless victim by whose sufferings we are to be healed, the Lamb slain for His people. The royal Branch of Isaiah will be like "a root out of a dry ground;" Messiah shall be called a "Man of Sorrows."§ This is the great lesson which prophecy gathers in the school of humiliation and suffering, and it is from these days of storm and darkness, to employ Ezekiel's image, that the divine Spirit sends forth His most vivid splendours. The prophets of the return only prolong the echo of these great oracles of the seers of the exile. The tribulations and humiliations of that period are the strongest evidence, that in the future must be sought the realisation of those magnificent promises, which were followed by the gradual decline of Judaism.

The function of the prophet is not alone to bring to the people the oracles, which proclaim chastisement and deliverance. He is the witness of God in their midst; he is not a son of the sanctuary by hereditary priesthood; his is a more direct call, received sometimes on the steps of the throne, as in the case of Zephaniah, sometimes among the sheepfolds as by Amos; he is raised up in Israel to breathe perennial life into that round of

* Ezek xxxiv. 12–15.
† Ezek. xxvii.
‡ Isaiah xlii. 1–7.
§ Isaiah liii.

institutions, which might easily become petrified into the legalism of the formalist. He represents the spirit ever animating the letter. He is the present and living word of the Lord, uttering His protest against all the deviations from the theocracy. He writes down the sin of the people with a pen of iron, and lays the axe of divine justice at the root of every tree which Jehovah has not planted. When Israel, forgetful of his vocation, will lean upon the stranger, the prophet interposes; he announces the judgments of God on idolatrous nations, and makes them recoil in all their weight on the stiff-necked people, whose wanderings and rebellions he depicts with burning fervour. The prophet is thus as much the representative of law as of mercy; he unites in his person the double office of the old covenant which is at once fear and hope, and which brings consolation only out of the terrors of conscience. The national history, interpreted by the prophet, sets in full light the abomination of sin, the wrath of God, and His mercy. Thus a deep repentance is produced in the heart, a bitter dew which alone can fertilise the soil, out of which shall grow the divine Branch promised to mankind.

Prophecy is in no way hostile to the priesthood, but it marks the insufficiency of this jealous guardian of the institutions of Moses. When Hosea says that God "desires mercy and not sacrifice,"* he only gives formal oracular utterance to that which was from the first the cry of the penitent. "Thou desirest not sacrifice," exclaims David in the bitterness of his repentance, "else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."† Assuredly the work of preparation was far advanced when the revelation of conscience came to confirm that of the law and the prophets, by that agonising cry which is still the truest expression of penitence, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude

* Hosea vi. 6. † Psalm li. 18, 19.

of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."* The progress was still more marked when, in the name of the whole nation, was offered that prayer of confession, which loses none of its value whatever may be its date. "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive."† It is impossible to enter now into the controversy raised upon the book from which these beautiful words are taken. It cannot be questioned that in it, prophecy assumes an entirely new character of precision, especially in its relation to the general history of mankind, for in it, for the first time, the succession of the great empires is pointed out with minute detail. Its symbolism is less simple than that of the classic prophets; it is complicated and sometimes fanciful. The animal typology familiar to Persia plays a great part in it. No book has been more variously interpreted than that attributed to Daniel; it is like the transition stage between the prophetic, properly so called, and the apocalyptic. But the inspiration which animates it is so pure, that we do not hesitate to give it its rank in the truly sacred literature of the Jews; Jesus Christ explicitly recognised its religious value by invoking its testimony.

* Psalm li. † Daniel ix.

We have endeavoured to elicit the general and dominant thought of the Old Testament. We admit that it is obscured often by the barbarism of the times, which is depicted with an unshrinking candour. The falls and crimes of the most illustrious founders of theocracy are related with no prudent reticence; but we see also their chastisements, and witness their poignant repentance. Thus we have a fearful and salutary demonstration of sin. Stern severities were necessary to arouse the stifled moral sense. Let imagination picture the rude infancy of a fallen race, left to the wild impulse of instincts, and we shall better understand the terrible rod, by which it was curbed under the hand of the divine educator. The Old Testament is not the idyl of innocence; it is the desperate conflict between good and evil in their first collision.

Something was still wanting to the work of preparation; this was the total ruin of all the glories of the theocracy, so that it might be well demonstrated that the Old Testament "could make nothing perfect," according to the expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

This decline was coincident with an extraordinary fermentation of men's minds. Thus was prepared one of the most amazing eras of history, characterised by the singular blending of the most opposite tendencies. It is important for us to form an exact idea of it, that we may rightly comprehend the condition in which Christianity took its rise.†

* Hebrews vii. 9.

† It is not my province in this short sketch to touch any of the critical questions raised upon the books of the Old Testament. I can only refer readers to special works, among the first of which I should mention Bleek's introduction on the transformations of the people during the exile. See also Ewald, "Gesch. Volkes Israel," IV. p. 117; this is a broad and admirable picture.

CHAPTER III.

THE JUDAISM OF THE DECLINE.

JUDAISM at the commencement of our era presented more points of resistance than of contact to Jesus Christ, because He came, in fact, to contradict and oppose all the beliefs and wishes of His contemporaries. Thus, the new religion, so far from being simply the consummation of an anterior development, only fulfilled the past by abolishing it. None the less do we maintain, that it was the response to all the best aspirations of the soul, and that the true people of God, those who listened to its claims, in a manner outran the future, borne onward by an ardent and exalted faith. We shall have to distinguish this double current of men's minds, in the troubled flood of an epoch of unparalleled moment.*

The moral and intellectual condition of Judaism, on the eve of the birth of Christ, can only be understood by a knowledge of the complex causes by which it was produced. Of these causes the most powerful was undoubtedly the nation's exile in Babylon, and the political and religious situation which resulted from it. This situation gave rise to one of those violent contradic-

* See the following works: Josephus' "Antiquities" and his "Wars of the Jews;" "Histoire des Juifs," by Prideaux; "La Palestine," by Munck; Ewald's "Gesch. Volkes Israel," Vol IV.; "La Kabbale," by Franck; Reuss' "Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne," Vol. I.; Nicolas' "Les Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs pendant les deux siècles antérieurs à l'ère Chrétienne;" Gfrœrer's "Das Jahrhundert des Heils," Vol. II. See especially the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. Fabricius' "Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Testamenti." "Das Buch Enoch," uebersetzt und erklärt v. Dillemann, Leipzig, 1853. "Das Buch Esdras," uebersetzt und erklärt v. Volkmar, Zurich, 1864.

tions which prevent a nation from falling into a state of slumberous repose. It may be summed up in two words: dependence on and hatred of the foreigner. Judæ from the time of the first destruction of Jerusalem had only brief periods of real emancipation; she was absorbed in the great empires which by turns dominated Asia. It was under the yoke, that this powerful race rose morally to the consciousness of her high destiny; in the times of her kings she was always inclined to culpable alliances and impure idolatries. From the bitter days of her captivity it was so no longer. By the waters of exile, the Jew, far from his beloved Zion, of which there remained only the smoking ashes, found another holy city, not built with stones, but with divine words, and the indestructible sanctuary of which was the law given to his fathers. Having lost the material, he reconquered the spiritual patrimony, by his re-established faith; he felt that the worship of the true God was the very essence of his nationality. Thus, when he returned to the land of his ancestors, as he was never able completely to reconquer it, and had the constant grief of feeling himself still subject to a foreign sway, he continued to bind in close connection his religion and his patriotism; he knew that, his God once abjured, he was nothing more than a vile slave, like those human herds which the conquerors of Asia dragged in their train or trampled under foot. To this feeling may be traced that noble religious restoration undertaken by Ezra and completed by Nehemiah; the people shrank from no sacrifice, and broke without hesitation the family ties formed during the period of disorganisation and exile. Henceforward the Jew was invariably attached to his faith and his rites; the theocracy flourished again on the ruins of a political glory for ever overthrown. It is no more under the image of a mighty king, a new Solomon, that the people represents Messiah; it sees in him rather a supreme high priest, as he appears in the oracles of the prophet Zechariah.* The reign of the saints has begun,

* Zech. iii.

for legal sanctity is the sole superiority and the sole liberty that can be preserved.

Assuredly this moral reconstruction is a great advance upon the past, but it conceals one fatal germ. Piety being confounded with patriotism, the mass of the people will be disposed to regard it rather as a means of maintaining pre-eminence over other nations, than as an end excellent in itself. Holiness will then be but external legalism, a conformity to the sacred letter without effect on the heart and conscience; then, the law, far from fulfilling its main design, which is to break the pride of man by placing before him a perfect ideal, will only nourish and strengthen it. Here was the peril, the gravity of which the future was to show. The close alliance between patriotism and religion tended also to excite, beyond all bounds, political passions and national pride. The Jew felt himself at once the favourite of heaven and the sport of pagan despotism; he knew himself superior to the nations, whose idolatry justly appeared to him abominable, and he was yet compelled to submit to the rule of those whom he despised. How great was his temptation to hold himself erect before masters—his inferiors—and to requite them scorn, for all the outrages he received at their hands! He, the founder of true religion in the world, was forced to bow beneath an idolatrous sceptre! Could such a thought be entertained and not stir in his heart a wild ferment of revolt and hate, and precipitate him into violent attempts, even more perilous to his religious life than to his temporal interests? Evidently the hope of the nation will undergo a great transformation under such influences; it will become impregnated in this heated atmosphere with wholly human passions; it will tend to become itself a firebrand of political agitation; the horizon of the future, illumined by the great prophets with calm and holy glories, will be coloured with the warm and burning tints of apocalyptic visions.

The complete cessation of prophecy, a short time after the return from the exile, contributed much to the religious decay

of Judaism. "After the death of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the last of the prophets," we read in the Talmud, "the Spirit disappeared from the midst of Israel."* When once this vast organisation, with its minuteness of ritual, ceased to be constantly vivified by the breath of prophecy often passing over it, like a divine whirlwind, to shake its entire fabric, its tendency was to petrify into immobility. The past was no longer looked upon as prefiguring the future, by its magnificent symbols. It was made itself the object of a servile attachment; it was preserved as a dead institution, and the Jew, making himself its jealous guardian, inaugurated the reign of the "letter which killeth." Tradition became increasingly predominant. The doctor of the law took the place of the prophet; the rabbi became, *par excellence*, the guide of the people. There was a manifest tendency to substitute knowledge for feeling in the order of religion. Hence that apotheosis of wisdom which appears in the earliest apocryphal writings of the Old Testament. From these icy heights blows a withering wind, which blasts the life of the soul, and takes the beauty and the grandeur from revelation; what is most touching in it disappears under the commentary.

The dispersion of a large number of Jews in Asia Minor, Egypt, and the West, as commercial relations multiplied, strengthened the influence of the rabbi. Far from their sanctuary, unable to offer to God the Levitical worship, the Jews who lived in foreign lands had no other means of preserving their religion, than the study of their law. The sacred Book was to them what the tabernacle had been to their fathers in the wilderness, and during the period of the conquest, before the altar of God had a splendid temple for its shelter. To read the law, to comment upon it, to fix its meaning, to keep the tradition of the elders, this was all that they could do in the far countries where they dwelt. They returned, no doubt, at certain intervals to the holy City, but the ordinary course of their

* "Ablatus est Spiritus sanctus ex Israele."—Gfrœrer, I., p. 135.

life was spent at a distance from it; they were no longer under the constant action of that great religious symbolism, which expressed so forcibly the need of purification and redemption. Sacrifice played but a small part in their life; religion habitually despoiled of those solemn ceremonies which set forth its positive character, dwindled little by little to a doctrine, an idea, a book. The temple lost in importance as the synagogue gained. There was in all this a revolution, the import of which was beyond calculation. The Jew of the olden time was wont to fall with ease to a point, lower than that of the Jew at this period; he became ensnared by idolatry and its unholy rites; but when he repented at the stern voice of the prophet or under the strokes of Divine justice, he returned to a deepened piety; he felt an earnest need of cleansing, of expiation, and the blood of bulls and of goats was not enough to give him peace. From the time of the restoration under Ezra, the Jew leads a life habitually more pure and more correct, but also he eludes more lightly the trouble of conscience. For the sacrifice which expresses the consciousness of sin and the hope of pardon, he rather substitutes almsgiving, that is, the fair outside work, by which he aims to set himself right with the divine law. In the book of Tobit we see what paramount importance is attached to this kind of reparation. It is not only the left hand knowing what the right hand does; it is the heart which applauds itself and imagines that it has fulfilled all righteousness.

Contact with foreigners had also a modifying effect upon Judaism in many respects. Sometimes the Jew would imbibe an admixture of altogether heterogeneous ideas; sometimes he would abandon himself to loose concessions; or again, he would hold himself erect in his patriotism, and stiffen into a rigid devotion and an obstinate resistance to all influences from without. We have thus very early the germ of the sharp division, which we shall find later producing themselves and forming sects and parties. Within a very short time after the restoration we find ourselves already confronted

with the elements which will clash or combine in the great final crisis.

I. Judaism under the Persians.

The Persian empire, which extends from the year 536 to the year 332, B.C., exercised less influence over the Jews than is often supposed. The religion of Zoroaster, at least before the modifications to which it has been subjected, is coloured, as we have already seen, by dualism. The idea of a God greater than Ormuz and Ahriman, makes only a tardy appearance, and remains but as a metaphysical idea without any real influence on the moral life. The world of spirit is only dimly discerned; spiritual light is confounded with the brightness of the sun, good with fruitfulness. The good rule of Ormuz is honoured alike in good actions and in abundant harvests.* Sin is constantly regarded as a simple corporeal defilement. The expectation of a deliverer is very vague; it is only little by little that the part of *Sosiosh*, the valiant champion of Ormuz develops into magnitude. The article of the resurrection of the body does not seem to belong to primitive mazdeism.† The Persians regarded corpses as the property of evil spirits; they therefore exposed them in desert places to be devoured by wild beasts. This custom is little compatible with the idea of the resurrection. Cyrus the First had a great sepulchre built for himself. It is certain that mazdeism underwent great changes; the traces of Jewish and Christian influence are evident in the *Bundehesh*, its last sacred book. The passage of Theopompus, quoted by Plutarch, in which mention is made of the triumph of the good over the evil god after a formidable conflict, belongs to a latè period. No one will deny that the idea of the Messiah had taken a much more definite form among the Jews than

* The principal work on mazdeism is the commentary of Eugène Burnouf on the Yaçna.

† The fragments of Theopompus, quoted by M. Nicolas ("Doctrine des Juifs") are very vague. In any case they belong to a time subsequent to the exile in Babylon.

among the Persians at the epoch when the two nations were brought into contact at Babylon. It would be idle to compare some vague allusions with the oracles of the Old Testament.

On one point only, the Jews borrowed something from their conquerors; this was in reference to the doctrine of good and evil angels. Not that this was a strange idea to them; we need no other proofs to the contrary than the account of the Fall, in Genesis, and the prologue to the Book of Job; the Book of Tobit, however, recalls in many points the minute classification of good and evil spirits in the "Avesta."* The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which give us such a faithful picture of the religious condition of the Jews on the return from Babylon, are, like the oracles of Zechariah and Malachi, among the most authentic productions of Hebrew inspiration. The prophets of the exile, no doubt, borrowed new symbols from the countries in which they lived; but the old spirit found utterance in this new language, which, more laboured, was less grand than that of earlier days. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body connected itself very naturally with certain facts recorded in the first books of the Old Testament, such as the translation of Enoch and Elijah. It was easy to draw from these narratives the permanence in the future life of the transfigured corporeal element.

The most important religious event under the Persian rule was the erection of the Samaritan temple, on Mount Gerizim, at the gates of Shechem, by Manasseh, brother of the high-priest Jaddus. Manasseh had refused to conform to the legal prescriptions which bound on him as a duty, the repudiation of the strange woman he had married. He took refuge with his father-in-law, Sanballat, governor of Samaria, and, taking advantage of his priestly origin, retired to the mountain, signalised by the blessings of Deuteronomy, to build there a rival sanctuary to that at Jerusalem. There he celebrated a modified

* See the remarkable pages devoted to this subject by M. Nicolas, pp. 340–350.

worship, and gathered around him a certain number of Jews who were wishful to escape the austerity of the restoration under Ezra, and all that remained of the old Samaritan population.* The emigrants from Jerusalem brought with them the Pentateuch, which they made their one sacred book, and thus founded a kind of bastard Judaism, which could not fail to excite the keenest animosity in their brethren of the holy city. Authority to build a temple on Mount Gerizim had been asked of the last of the Persian monarchs, and it was granted by the conqueror of Darius.

II. Judaism under the Greeks.

With Alexander began the Greek empire, which extends from the year 337 to 167. Judæa shares in all the revolutions which convulse Asia under the successors of the conqueror. This troubled political life could not fail to increase the fermentation of national passions. One of the first effects of the new condition of things was the breaking down of the barriers, which had separated the Jews from other nations, and the development of their commercial genius. In Egypt especially they founded an important colony. A large portion of the people fell under the influence of Hellenic culture, without, however, renouncing their religious traditions. The necessity of bringing into unison the new ideas and the old customs gave birth to that famous allegorical method, which was to render such dangerous service, and to be the parent of so many absurdities. The appearance of the Greek Bible in Alexandria, under Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-247), the illustrious patron of letters and founder of the great library, was an important event; the isolated and positive genius of the Hebrews contracts, for the first time, a sort of marriage with the subtle and brilliant genius of Greece. This new influence is betrayed in the Septuagint version by certain systematic modifications,

* Josephus—(Arch. II., 7, 2.)

which indicate the presence of the Platonic notion of the character of absolute transcendence in the Deity.*

This Hellenic influence, which was to acquire increasing importance in Egypt, is less perceptible in Judæa, though, even there, it has left its traces, as is proved by the book of Jesus Sirach. The author chooses, both in morals and religion, the *via media* which is without greatness and without peril. He presents the apotheosis of wisdom, that is of religion considered solely as doctrine. He makes it utter these words :—"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a cloud. I dwelt in the high places, and my throne was on the pillar of clouds. I sought rest, and asked myself in what heritage I should abide. Then he who created me pointed out my dwelling-place, saying: Abide in Jacob, and let thy heritage be in Israel. I took root in the midst of a new people: I grew like a cedar in Lebanon, like a palm-tree by the rivers of water. All these things are the book of the Testament of God, the law given to Moses."†

Jesus Sirach exalts supremely the dignity of the scribes and doctors. "As to the man," he says, "who devotes his mind to the law of the Most High, and searches out the wisdom of all the ancients, he exercises himself in the prophecies. The Lord will direct his counsel and his knowledge, and will make known to him His secrets. Many shall praise his prudence, so that his memory shall never be blotted out nor cast away, but

* Thus the earth "*without form and void*," in the Hebrew text of the account of the creation, becomes, in the translation, an earth invisible and without form—*ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος*. (Genesis i. 21.) In the 5th verse, the translation reads—"And God created all the grass of the field before it *existed on the earth*." This transports us at once into the world of ideas, types of created things—we are in the heart of Platonic philosophy. The Septuagint translation also disguises, as far as possible, theophanies, everywhere substituting an angel for God.

† *Ἐγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου ἐξῆλθον*. (c. xxiv., 5.) The last words of this panegyric of wisdom show, that the author intends by it nothing else than the Mosaic revelation personified.

his name shall endure from generation to generation."* Jesus Sirach celebrates in magnificent terms the greatness of the priesthood; but it is evident that he has lost the deep meaning of the worship, and has no comprehension of that sublime symbolism which was meant to express the need of pardon. With him almsgiving truly expiates sin.† He exalts the authority of tradition. "Abide," he says, "in the assembly of the elders, and hold fast by the wise man; forsake not the instruction of the elders, for they have learned it of their fathers." The book of Sirach may be regarded as the first rough sketch of Sadduceeism, or of the party of the foreigner. The author resigns himself to the sudden revolutions of empires on the reflection that man is but dust and ashes; and, in one significant passage, he denies the immortality of the soul. To him the dead ceases to be anything.‡ Thus he is profuse in counsels of cowardly prudence. He advises no contest with the powerful and rich. The consciousness of our own culpability is to arrest on our lips, every vehement protestation against crime.§ Jesus Sirach can conceive nothing beyond the Mosaic, which he calls an everlasting covenant.‖

This tendency, which weakened and corrupted mercy by making it a mere matter of policy, took a new development in Antigonus of Socho. From him is quoted a noble, and almost evangelical precept. "Be not," he said, "as servants, who will serve the Lord for wages, but as servants who serve Him with no mercenary view, and let the fear of heaven be upon you."¶ Truly, a most beautiful maxim, and one denoting a legitimate reaction from the legal formalism which was in process of de-

* (Chap. XXXIX., 1—13.)
† Ἐλεημοσύνη ἐξιλάσεται ἁμαρτίας. (Chap. III., 33.)
‡ Ἀπὸ νεκροῦ ὡς μηδὲ ὄντος ἀπόλλυται ἐξομολόγησις. (XVII., 26.)
§ (Chap. VIII., 1).
‖ (XLV., 9.)
¶ "Pirke Aboth; or Treatise on Principles"—(p. 483.) This is one of the most important portions of the Talmud: in it are found the most ancient traditions of doctrine and morals. I quote from the ritual of "Daily Prayers," published by Anspach.

velopment. Unhappily for him, Antigonus of Socho was the master of Zadok, the founder proper of Sadduceeism. The opinions of Zadok can only be gathered from the party which claimed him as their leader, and which soon rallied round itself the men of easy life, by reducing Judaism to its elementary institutions, and setting aside the austerities and fervency of the old prophetic epoch. Sadduceeism showed itself always disposed to submit to the yoke of foreign powers, while lightening it as far as possible. It denied to God any permanent and direct action on the human soul; and if it vindicated with urgency the play of free human activity in the terrestrial domain, it closed to it the higher sphere.

Already at this epoch there arose, by a natural reaction, the party of the *chasidim*, or the pious, who united passionate patriotism with the strictest adherence to the Mosaic institutions. We have here the germ of Pharisaism, which will unfold under the fires of terrible persecution in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Nothing could be more adapted to inflame the national passions in a fierce and indomitable race, than the shameless outrages of this despot, who seemed touched with the mad folly of boundless power, and who might be a prototype of Cæsar. What a spectacle for the Jews was that of their holy city in ruins, of their sanctuary invaded, and the altar of Jehovah defiled by an idol! What indignation must have consumed them, when they found themselves compelled to follow the procession in honour of Bacchus, with brows crowned with ivy. The resistance offered was that which might have been expected from such a people reduced to despair; but the hand of repression was implacable; the blood of the worshippers of the true God flowed in floods through the streets of Jerusalem. Antiochus was to the Judaism of the restoration, what Nero was to the primitive Church, the personification of diabolical power, the hideous image of a world at enmity with God. We shall find him playing in the coming apocalypses

the same part as the first persecutor of the Christians in the Revelation of St. John.

As the result of this bloody tyranny, the Jews prepared for one supreme conflict, which was to inaugurate the definitive era; this is what they afterwards called the anguish of Messiah, or the painful birth-throes of the Deliverer. An apocryphal writing of this date is full of these sentiments; it is the book called the "Psalter of Solomon." After the manner of the times, the aspirations and griefs of the pious Israelites are placed under the protection or the sanction of an already illustrious name. The desolation and profanation of the holy city are depicted in vivid colours. "Jerusalem has been trodden under foot of the nations. She has changed her vestment of glory for sackcloth. The blood of the sons of Israel has been spilt like an impure stream. Strange nations have gone up to Thine altar. A fierce wind has smitten our land and laid it waste."*

The unknown poet protests vehemently against the cowards who seek to please men: "Reveal thy works, O Lord; let the saints execute thy judgments by driving the sinners from before thy face, and foremost the man who professes thy law deceitfully." Thus in these terrible afflictions the party of the saints, or the pious, lifts its voice against the party of the foreigner.

The expectation of Messiah is expressed with new fervency. "Behold, Lord, and raise up in thine appointed time, David thy son to reign over Israel! Deliver Jerusalem from the nations which oppress her! Destroy thou the unrighteous nations with the word of thy mouth! Let them flee before him! Let him gather together thine holy people to lead them into all righteousness."†

III. The Maccabees and the Roman empire.

The cry was heard. The deliverer was raised up; it was not

* Fabricius "Codex Pseudepigraphus," I., pp. 918, 922, 963.
† Καθάρισον Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἀπὸ ἐθνῶν καταπατούντων. . (p. 965).

yet the Divine Son of David who was to answer the great desire of mankind, but one of those incomplete precursors who after their disappearance became new types of Messiah. There is nothing so beautiful in the history of Judaism at this period as the war of giants, waged by the handful of patriots who gathered round the Maccabees. The intense grief of the faithful Jews at the sight of the abominations of the holy place, that mixture of growing indignation and panting aspiration, which breathes in the obscure and mutilated strains from which we have quoted some fragments; in these we have the inspiration of that heroic insurrection which sprang full armed from the humble hamlet, where the old priest Mattathias with his sons had kept the faith of Israel. It might have been the very lion of Judah leaping from the mountains of Ephraim. It is not our province to describe that noble conflict, in which material force shatters itself against the moral, in which the vast armies of the Seleucidæ melt like snow in the sun, before the fervid courage of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, in which reverses and disasters only inflame resistance, and render it more obstinate and invincible.

This magnificent outburst of Jewish patriotism was to create an ideal full of grandeur, but also full of peril. How could Messiah assume any other form than that of Judas Maccabeus, to a people possessed by the noblest of human passions? The pathetic symbols of Isaiah and Jeremiah paled before the image of the young warrior, crushing the might of Antiochus and bathing the steps of the sanctuary with the blood of the sacrilegious. This vision of the warrior archangel was thenceforward ever to float before the eyes of the Jews. We may judge from the portion of the Sibylline oracles which belongs to this date and is of Hebrew origin, what was the fascination of these first triumphs of the war of independence.* These

* "Oracula Sybillina," Alexandre's Edition. Paris: Didot, 1841–55. We may not enter here on the curious question of the Sibylline Oracles. The word "sibyl" is a contraction of two words,

famous oracles were composed in Alexandria about the year 115 B.C. Completely foreign to the Platonic and theosophic tendency, which was soon to become dominant in the Egyptian synagogues, they are thoroughly animated by the exclusive patriotism then prevalent in Palestine. They only borrow from the Greeks the well-known legend of the Sibyls. They put their favourite dreams into the mouth of these prophetesses of nature, who are thus made to confirm the great oracles of the Old Testament, and to contribute to the glory of the people of God in the midst of paganism. The Sibyl is, then, only the complaisant echo of the aspirations and hopes of the Jews, at the time of the Maccabees. It is this which gives a high interest to this monotonous rhapsody. We find in it just that expectation of a wholly warlike Messiah and of a purely earthly salvation, which was the natural consequence of the events recently transpired in Judæa.

This strange poem fulminates terrible menaces against all idolatrous nations, and in particular against the Greeks, who were then the dominant race oppressing Asia; its whole theme is Divine vengeance. The Jewish nation is distinguished by

Διὸς βουλή, which mean *oracle of God*. The origin of the myth is, doubtless, the superstitious interpretation of certain subterranean sounds heard in caves, and considered as bringing divine revelations. A kind of prophetesses of nature was placed in these caves. We know from ancient Roman history that these were regarded as the receivers of oracles, the rejection of which involved the greatest misfortunes. It is easy to understand that the idea of making use of this fable might occur to the Jews of Alexandria, who were desirous of exalting the glory of their nation. It is certain that the third book of the Sibylline Oracles is by a Jew; this is convincingly proved by the praises lavished on the people of Israel, and the punishment denounced on pagan nations. The date of the third book is not doubtful. The historian Josephus makes a clear allusion to the passage on the Tower of Babel ("Antiquities," I. 43). The unknown author lived under the seventh Ptolemy, called Ptolemy Physcon, that is, from the year 170 to 117 B.C., as may be gathered from verse 618 of the third book. See the paper by M. Alexander, Vol. II. p. 318, and M. Reuss' article on the Sibyls in Herzog's "Encyclopædia."

the worship of the true God, from the corrupt masses of the Gentile world. To it alone the great God has given wisdom in counsel, faith, and holy thoughts. Deity, outraged by an idolatrous world, will visit it with the most fearful scourges; His rod will smite the king of Asia who, under the seventh Ptolemy, desolated the earth; like a fierce eagle, he made the ground tremble beneath his cavalry, and the heavy tread of his infantry carried everywhere ruin and destruction. It is easy to recognise in this description Antiochus Epiphanes. The Hebrew poet sees in the tragical events of his reign, the precursive signs of the universal deliverance of which the Jews are to be the instruments. The earth, piled with human corpses left to be devoured by wild beasts, and spoiled of her harvests, bears witness by her hideous nakedness to the crimes of her inhabitants. "Then from the land of the sun* God will send forth a King who shall put an end to war in the whole earth, by destroying the wicked and bringing the righteous into his covenant." Evidently this is a warrior king, who is to establish universal peace by his conquering sword. A second Maccabeus shall achieve the work commenced by the first. The happiness of mankind when it shall have been brought (thanks to the Jews) under his laws, is represented in lively imagery. The people of the great God will roll in gold and silver, will be clothed in purple, and earth and seas will pour their treasures at their feet.†

One last conflict, announced by terrible signs from heaven, will be waged by the jealous nations, who will seek to invade the Temple at Jerusalem; but God himself will interpose and rain down fire and brimstone from heaven. After this final triumph the nations will bring their offerings into the sanctuary, which will be filled with the smoke of their incense; then will commence the eternal reign of the saints in uninterrupted felicities. The leopard shall lie down with the kid, the olive-

* Ἀπ' ἠελίοιο (v. 650).

† Λαὸς δ' ἂν μεγάλοιο Θεοῦ περικαλλέι πλούτῳ (v. 657 and following).

tree shall be covered with never-withering fruits, the springs shall flow with milk whiter than snow, and the child shall play with the serpent.

We see how earthly have become the hopes of the Jews; they do not rise beyond an entirely material happiness, founded on the triumph of monotheism. The part of Messiah is become only secondary, since the supreme deliverance is ascribed to divine power. In Judæa, the religious ideal is not more exalted, as is proved by the Book of Judith, which breathes an infatuated patriotism which does not recoil from murder. The one expectation is salvation by the sword, and for that they will perish by the sword.

The Maccabees had almost realised the dream of the pious party, henceforward designated by the name of Pharisees, or separatists, and forming a sort of religious aristocracy, fanatic and disdainful. From their ranks had come forth the first deliverers; their party had been their stay, and by their courage success had been achieved. But victory was fatal to the Maccabees. To assure an ever-disputed triumph in the midst of incessant wars, provoked by the different pretenders to the throne of the Seleucidæ, they were obliged to have recourse to artful policy and to seek their centre of support now in one camp, now in another. They made the high priestly office rather a civil magistracy than a religious function. Already under Johannes Hyrcanus, the nephew of the great Maccabeus, they began to subordinate the cause of religion and country to their personal ambition. It was still, however, a glorious epoch of independence and power. But from the day when Aristobulus, son of Hyrcanus, put on the diadem and took the name of king, the heroic inspiration which had made the fortunes of his family vanished. The new race of kings underwent the same revolutions of the palace, as other Asiatic royalties of those times. Aristobulus starved his mother to death. Alexander Jannæus, his brother and successor, assassinated his brother Antigonus on a false suspicion, and then went

over to the Sadducees. It was a cruel disenchantment to the Pharisees when they saw the successor and heir of the Maccabees witnessing, in the midst of his harem, the infamous torture of eight hundred of their adherents. Such a spectacle and such bitter experiences served only to exasperate their resistance. Their influence on the people continued great, in view of the sanguinary atrocities of a divided and degraded court.

The last of the Maccabees, in their desperate rivalries, invoked more than once the support of the great Roman republic, towards which their illustrious ancestor had already turned his eyes, when it seemed yet too remote to menace the independence of Judæa. Circumstances had changed: Roman armies had already trodden the soil of Asia. The infallible result of so dangerous an alliance was the ultimate subjugation of the Jews. Called in successively by the two sons of Jannæus Alexander—Hyrcanus and Aristobulus—who were disputing for power, the Romans invaded Jerusalem the first time under Pompey, in the cause of Aristobulus; then they were brought over to the party of Hyrcanus, through the artifices of his perfidious counsellor, Antipater, the Idumean, who was artfully laying the foundation of his own greatness. His second son, Herod, uniting the most consummate political cunning with prowess worthy of a Roman general, and never staggered by a crime, succeeded in manœuvring so well in a time of changing fortune, that after having received the crown of Judæa from the hands of the Senate (thanks to the protection of Antony), he saw his kingdom aggrandized by the favour of Augustus. He had shaken off, by treason or violence, the last of the Maccabees; he had had drowned before his eyes the young Aristobulus, his wife's nephew, who had a right to the high priestly office; then he made a mock tribunal pronounce sentence on his wife, the beautiful Mariamne, niece of the old Hyrcanus who had been so long his protector; soon after, he immolated the two sons he had by her, dreading in them the avengers of their mother. He trampled fearlessly under foot

all the national customs, built cities in honour of Augustus. and adorned them with circuses and theatres, as if he had been the king of a pagan country. Such was the king of the Jews at the time when the religious and national fermentation reached its highest point. This *protégé* of the Romans, this descendant of the hated race of Esau, this insolent contemner of the religion of the country, this cruel despot covered with the blood of his kindred, a debauchee and a murderer, united in himself all that would exasperate the national party. Seated on the throne of David which he profaned, he became to the Pharisees, and to the people whom they animated with their passions, an object of unutterable loathing; the Sadducees alone were satisfied.

A short time previously the account of the exploits of the Maccabees had been written.* In it lived and acted the heroes of the holy war. These proud and noble representatives of victorious resistance were painted, in vivid colours, before the eyes of a people down-trodden and fettered, but animated at heart with the same aspirations. The contrast between so glorious a past and a present so humiliating, contributed to de-

* We have four books in the Jewish Apocrypha which bear the name of Maccabees. The first is like the epopœia of the glorious revolt of Mattathias and Judas. It was written some time after the death of Johannes Hyrcanus, for the conclusion of the book alludes to the chronicles relating to him, thus supposing some lapse of time since his reign (Macc. xvi. 24). The favourable manner in which the author speaks of the Romans leads to the belief that he wrote before their direct interference in the conflicts of Syria. The second book of Maccabees is a letter to the Jews in Egypt, designed to bind them to the temple at Jerusalem. It is of later date than the first, as shown by its legendary character. It dates, however, from an epoch anterior to Christianity, for the epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 31) makes allusion to 2 Macc. vi. 19. The third book has no historical value; it is a mythical account of the miracle which prevented Ptolemy Philopater from penetrating into the Holy of Holies on his journey to Jerusalem. The composition of this book belongs, perhaps. to the epoch of the impious follies of Caligula. The fourth book of Maccabees, which continues the works of Josephus, is a cold dissertation on the martyrdom of the seven brothers, already recounted in the first book.

velop in the mass of the nation the desire after a Messiah, but a Messiah bearing the impress of an earthly and feverish imagination, as is evident from this significant passage in the first book of Maccabees—"The Jews and their priests had consented that Simon should be their chief and their high-priest for ever, till there should arise some faithful prophet; till that epoch they would that their general should have charge of the holy places, and should be obeyed by all."* This was indicating clearly that the power of the sword was to belong later to the Messiah, since Simon was but His precursor. The family of Simon had disappeared, and the Great Prophet, who was to restore the theocracy, was not yet come. The portion of the people, therefore, who had remained faithful to the tradition of the fathers, was cherishing an ever-growing desire after Him.

Now that we know the political circumstances which pressed with so heavy a weight on the public mind, we may form some just idea of the moral condition of the Jews in their own country, and in the synagogues of foreign lands.

IV. Alexandrine Judaism—Philo.

We have seen Jewish colonies steadily multiplying in the great centres of civilisation. The most important of these colonies was settled in Egypt; its first nucleus had been formed after the conquest of Ptolemy I., 324 years before the Christian era. From that time it had not ceased to grow. After the murder of the high-priest Onias II., his eldest son obtained of Ptolemy Philometor permission to build a temple at Leontopolis; he did not dare to build it exactly on the model of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, but he set up, nevertheless, an altar of sacrifice, taking his stand on the words of Isaiah.† This new temple gradually lost its importance, when the Maccabees had

* Ἕως τοῦ ἀναστῆναι προφήτην πιστὸν καὶ τοῦ εἶναι ἐπ' αὐτῶν στρατηγὸν (1 Macc. xiv. 41, 42)

† Isaiah xix. 19.

purified the holy city; it continued, nevertheless, in high honour in Egypt, and preserved to the Jews of that country a certain independence. They were much happier than their brethren in Judæa, for the protection of the Ptolemies never failed them; they possessed the same civil rights as the Greeks. Their schools and synagogues became flourishing, but they were also largely influenced by Hellenism. We have already pointed out the traces of this in the Septuagint translation, which was itself a powerful means of preserving and developing Greek culture among them. They were quickly led, in Egypt, into that movement of universal coalition, which constituted the glory of Alexandria. Judaism lost there the true meaning of the religion of the fathers; while the Pharisees in Palestine were burying the spirit under the dead letter, the Egyptian school lost sight of the letter under subtle interpretations, and ended by dissolving the positive realities of the Mosaic dispensation in the crucible of syncretism. Platonic philosophy was gradually substituted for the monotheism of the Old Testament.

The book of the Wisdom of Solomon, which was written at Alexandria two centuries before Christ, bears the impress of this metaphysical dualism. The author in vain appeals to the most significant facts of Jewish history, he never rises above a mere general notion of righteousness; the spirit which animates his lengthy exhortations is that of Plato rather than of Moses. He believes in the pre-existence of souls,* in the eternity of matter,† and is an advocate of asceticism.‡ Wisdom, of which he gives such beautiful descriptions, he confounds with the divine but impersonal prototype, upon which the world has been modelled. It is an idea and not a person; it fills all things, permeates the souls of the holy, and is diffused

* Μᾶλλον δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὢν ἦλθον εἰς σῶμα ἀμίαντον (viii. 20.)

† "God is the disposer of that which is" (τεχνίτης τῶν ὄντων, viii. 6.)

‡ "Blessed is the barren" (iii. 13). "The mortal body enchains the soul" (ix. 15.)

like a luminous ether throughout the universe.* From all the images employed to exalt it, nothing more than this can be gathered, Messiah will have no other mission than to establish the dominion of the Jews over the other nations, and their Lord will reign for ever. Alexandrine Judaism took a more decided form with Aristobulus, who sought to win honours for it among the Greeks, by arbitrarily interpreting or re-casting the Orphic hymns, and by leading the way in the bold use of the allegorical method; he hoped thus to eliminate from the Old Testament all that would not square with his system.

The chief representative of this tendency was Philo, the celebrated contemporary of Christ. The Old Testament, like the Gospel, keeps to solid moral ground; liberty plays the first part in the destinies of our race; it alone explains the fall of man and his restoration. We have before us a living history, a real drama, which had its beginning as it will have its close. With Philo we never leave the region of metaphysics. History is a continuation of the cosmogony; it is nothing more than the eternal realisation of the necessary laws, which preside over the formation and organisation of the world. The two systems are thus in manifest contradiction on all the essential points of religious doctrine, whether relating to the origin of things, to the principle of evil, or the salvation of mankind. Between Oriental dualism and Jewish or Christian theism, the opposition is radical. Now Philo only revived this old dualism, enveloping it with ingenious allegories as with a veil; it is easy to recognise it under the sincere homage which he pays lavishly to the religion of his fathers. His God, let him say what he will, is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who reveals Himself to His worshippers, and guides and protects them while He claims their obedience and their love; He is an abstract Being, raised above unity itself; He is placed

* It is a breath (ἀτμίς) of the divine virtue, an emanation (ἀπορρόια) of the glory of the Almighty, a reflection of His splendour. Εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσιας μεταβαίνουσα (vii. 27–30).

above the good and the true, and all the categories of thought.* He did not produce the world from nothing by a free act of creation; He can never cease to produce any more than the fire can cease to burn, or the snow to chill.† Light and life emanate from him like the beam from the star. Matter cannot be an emanation from Him; thus it represents the element of diversity, disorder, passivity, which is in direct opposition to absolute being. It exists, then, eternally in His presence, and has, like Himself, neither beginning nor end; He educes from it a perfect world by a process of organisation. As God cannot come into direct contact with matter, He uses as media the ideas or powers which emanate from Him, and which are the types of all the realities contained in the world; these are the divine seals which, impressed upon formless matter, give to it form and beauty, and bring out of it the Cosmos.‡ These ideas, these powers, are called angels, when regarded in their multiplicity; they form, in combination, the ideal world of archetypes, or the world of the Word. In vain Philo ascribes to this Word the most eminent attributes, calls him the Son of God, the Sovereign Priest; he never for a moment lifts him out of the frozen sea of abstractions.§

Evil is not born of the estrangement of the will, it results

* Ὁ θεὸς μόνος ἐστὶ καὶ ἓν, τέτακται κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὴν μονάδα ("Leg. Alleg." ii. 1). Τὸ ὂν ὃ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ κρεῖττον ἐστὶ καὶ ἑνὸς εἰλικρινέστερον ("De Vita Contemplativa," 1).

† Παύεται γὰρ οὐδέποτε ποιῶν ὁ θεὸς, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἴδιον τὸ καίειν πυρὸς καὶ χιόνος τὸ ψύχειν, οὕτω καὶ θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν ("Leg. Alleg." i. 3).

‡ Ἐξ ἐκείνης πάντ' ἐγέννησεν ὁ θεὸς, οὐκ ἰφαπτόμενος αὐτὸς, οὐ γὰρ ἦν θέμις ἀπείρου καὶ πεφυρμένης ὕλης ψαύειν, ἀλλὰ ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις δυνάμεσιν, ὧν ἔτυμον ὄνομα αἱ ἰδέαι, κατεχρήσατο πρὸς τὸ γένος ἕκαστον τὴν ἁρμόττουσαν λαβεῖν μορφήν ("De Sacr." 13).

§ Οὐδὲν ἂν ἕτερον τὸν νοητὸν εἶναι κόσμον ἢ θεοῦ λόγον κοσμοποιοῦντος ("De Mundi Opific.," vi). The heavenly place is full of incorporeal words (πλήρης ἀσωμάτων ἐστὶ λόγων) "De Somn." i. 21. These incorporeal words are the angels who personify ideas. The one and personal word, then, has no existence. See, on the impossibility of assimilating the *Word* of Philo to that of St. John, the noble remarks of M. Dorner, in his introduction to his great book on the "History of the Doctrine and Person of Jesus Christ" (p. 27–58).

from the very nature of things: it is inherent in the creature, inasmuch as the creature has in it the corporeal or material element which does not emanate from God. Man is then made imperfect and a sinner by his very origin; image of the world, he contains within himself its two essential elements; the spiritual and ideal was communicated to him by divine forces, and these united it in some fashion with the material element, which itself existed from all eternity.* If it was unworthy of the dignity of God directly to create man, how can He truly unite Himself with him? Man is not endowed with enough of liberty to modify his own destiny; all depends on the proportion of the elements which enter into the composition of his being. The mass of mankind is drawn to evil by the weight of the passive or material element. But there is at the heart of humanity a glorious elect, a truly sacerdotal race which rises to the region of ideas; this is the Hebrew race to which noble souls, like Pythagoras and Plato, link themselves† Moses is their most illustrious representative; following in his track, these privileged ones may, by ecstacy and contemplation, raise themselves to the ineffable God, or rather lose themselves in Him. Like the cicada which feeds on the dew of heaven, their soul is nourished by truth and adoration.‡

By many artifices of interpretation does Philo essay to bring within his system the sacred books of his people; now he has recourse to the symbolism of numbers, now he plays on names; he treats historical realities like clay which he may mould at his pleasure; following the example of his God, he impresses the stamp of his ideas on formless matter. The history of Israel becomes a pure fable of the cosmogony. Institutions are not less changed than facts and texts. Thus the priesthood, that dominant institution of the Mosaic dispensation, designed

* "Man is a compound being, with a mortal and an immortal nature; he was not created directly by God, but formed into what he is by divine power."—"De Præmiis et Pœnis."

† Οἱ μὲν γῆς, οἱ δὲ οὐρανοῦ. ("De Gigant.," xiii.) ‡ "Leg. Alleg." iii. 14.

to express the need of pardon and expiation, is reduced, by Philo, to a cosmical symbolism. The high priest represents the whole of creation. His pontifical vestments correspond to the various parts of the world.* He is priest and mediator, just as the word is, by symbolising the world of ideas and forces, which is the true medium between the Supreme God and matter, for it alone frees the latter from its primal state of confusion. The priest is not needed to appease the offended Deity, but simply to deliver man from his ignorance by revealing to him his relation to God, and his place in the order of the universe. There is here no ontological mystery, the knowledge of which is salvation; all that is required is that man should be brought to know his true condition, and to realise it by means of asceticism. Sacrifice then becomes a mere unimportant rite. Philo declares that the purified soul of the wise is the true altar of Deity.† If he escapes the exclusiveness of his compatriots, if he admits that Judaism is a universal religion, he does so, not taking his stand like the prophets on the accomplishment of the vast designs of divine mercy, but in the name of his system of philosophy which makes the whole world only the eternal manifestation of ideas. According to him no new act is necessary to remove the barriers between God and man, or between man and man. There is no place for reconciliation in a system which embraces all in the immutable plan of a creation, which has had no beginning in time. Every time the Jewish high-priest goes up to the altar, he sacrifices for the whole world, for what he does is only to symbolise that which has always existed. Of what avail is a Messiah in such a system? What is there to save or to heal? If Philo speaks of the future developments of Judaism under a glorious king, he only gives utterance to a vague memory of the prophets.‡

* ("De Monarchia," Lib. II.) † ("De Victimis offerendis.")

‡ "There shall arise a man according to the word of God, who, being chief of his army and making war, shall establish his dominion over great and populous nations. God will send succour to the saints." ("De Præmiis et Pœnis.")

That which is the essential feature of the Old Testament is a mere accessory in his doctrine; salvation, with him, reduces itself to a knowledge of the eternal order of things and a realisation of the same by contemplation and asceticism. Each man is the true Messiah and Saviour for himself; Moses is only so highly exalted by Philo, because he sees in him the type of the perfect ascetic.

A judgment may now be formed of the assertion so lightly thrown out, that Philo is the elder brother of Jesus and the inspirer of St. John. For my part, I know no contradictions in the history of human thought, more flagrant than those which exist between the doctrines of these two. The first rests wholly upon the negation of moral evil; the starting-point of the second is the deep and bitter consciousness of sin. Alexandrine theosophy admits no redemption; the Gospel is nothing without this article. Philo proclaims the impossibility of Deity uniting Himself directly with the human creature, while the incarnation is the grand theme of St. John. The one sees in the Word only the abstract generalisation of divine ideas; the other adores in Him the "only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." Philo's ultimatum is this: *Deity cannot touch that which is material.* The fourth Gospel is summed up in this expression of its prologue: "*The Word became flesh.*" The antithesis is absolute, for that which is with St. John a capital truth, would be to the Jew of Alexandria appalling blasphemy. If, then, Christianity must, at all costs, be linked with an antecedent system, this precursor must be sought elsewhere than in the synagogues of Egypt. The outgrowth of these was the sect of the *Therapeutics* of which Philo draws a poetic picture; he has nothing but eulogy for that contemplative asceticism, which reminds us of the wildest excesses of India. Between his system and the Gospel there is the same difference, as between those silent and attenuated recluses and the first Christians—those conquerors of the world by their mission and their martyrdom.

Flourishing Jewish colonies had been founded at this epoch in Asia Minor, in Babylon, in Greece, and the islands of the Mediterranean. They were bound to the mother country by closer ties than the Egyptian Jews, who formed as it were a nation by themselves. They annually sent their offerings to the Temple, and had their representatives at the great festivals. Nothing could be more simple than the democratic organisation of the synagogue, governed by a council of elders which elected its president; nothing less elaborate than its worship, which consisted of readings and explanations of the sacred books on the Sabbath day. Thus the true religion was maintained in the land of strangers. The Jews of the dispersion could not, however, be uninfluenced by the intellectual atmosphere of their times. The *Hellenists* were less narrow in spirit than the dwellers in Palestine, although a large number of them were little disposed to abandon their national privileges, as is proved by the resolute hostilities which St. Paul encountered in foreign synagogues. Each synagogue was a centre of proselytism, and made numerous converts from the Pagan world. "Our laws," said Philo, "attract all to themselves, barbarians, strangers, Greeks, the dwellers on continents and in islands, in the East, in the West, and in Europe."* The proselytes were divided into proselytes of the *Gate*, or of the first degree, subject to what were called the precepts of Noah, which extended only to the proscription of all idolatrous practices, and proselytes of *righteousness*, those who decidedly incorporated themselves with the people of God.

V. Sects and Parties in Judæa.

The sect of the Essenes forms the link between the Judaism of Palestine and that of Alexandria. It was formed under the influence of Oriental dualism, which hovered in the atmosphere as well of Asia as of Egypt. The transcendent mysticism which took form later in the *Kabbala* existed then as an

* "Vita Moysis," Lib. II.

influence. The *Talmud* makes plain allusions to it, and its fundamental beliefs were unquestionably very widely spread. The theory of emanations was one of the great intellectual currents of the age. The idea of a hidden and mysterious Deity revealing Himself by His attributes, purely ideal hypostases forming in their combination the prototype of the world, and above all of man; the assimilation of evil to matter, exegesis reduced to allegorism, and morals to asceticism; such are the traits common to all the developments of Oriental theosophy.* It is not surprising to find them in Judæa under a form less philosophical than in Egypt, and rather in the state of vague aspiration than with the rigour of a system properly so called. "*Death is the kiss of God*," we read in the *Kabbala*. This melancholy utterance, which so well expresses the inconsolable sadness of the finite creature aspiring to lose itself in the infinite, may date, perhaps, from these troubled times.

It is evident to us that Essenism was the product of the dualistic tendency. The representation given of it by Philo and Josephus shows it to us, as not only in quest of a purer morality, but also as devoted to practices which savour of Pythagorism.† It is, indeed, a plant springing in the soil of Judæa, but it unfolds under the same breath, which in so many different soils developed an ascetic mysticism. The Essenes, retiring to the solitudes of the Dead Sea, broke with the national religion; these men of the Desert condemned it by their eagerness to place themselves beyond its official enclosure; they thus declared it to be at least insufficient. By suppressing sacrifices of blood, by forbidding to cross the threshold of the temple, they formed in reality a new religion over which presided elders who had no bond with the priesthood. They had established a severe initiation of three

* See M. Franck's work on the Kabbala, and M. Reuss's article in Herzog's "Encyclopœdia."

† See Philo's treatise, "De Vita Contemplativa," and Josephus, "Bell. Judaic.," II. 8.

degrees, and had been eager to abolish all distinction of rank, so as to efface the faintest trace of slavery. Unhappily they had at the outset rendered sterile all their reforms, by isolating themselves from their people. The equality of a monastery will never bear application to common life.

This was not all. Not content with having instituted a community of possessions, they condemned marriage in itself.* They showed clearly that they regarded matter as the source of evil, by the extraordinary precautions which they took to cleanse themselves from all corporeal defilement. Clothed in white, they offered their prayer to the sun with the first rays of dawn;† they saw, doubtless, in the pure light of the morning, the symbol of Deity. The Essenes only acknowledged the Pentateuch, and rejected all the prophetic developments of the old covenant. What harmony could exist between Christianity and this dualistic sect, which cut itself off, in fact, from the religious tradition of the Old Testament, and, following the example of the school of Philo, left to man the charge of working out his own salvation by asceticism? More a stranger than any other portion of the Jewish people to the expectation of Messiah, it deluded the high aspirations of the soul by conventual practices; the desert was not to it the school of sanctity designed to gird the spirit for heroic conflicts, but the refuge to which it fled to escape from the strife.‡ Thus notwithstanding some wholly external analogies, it remained without any relations with the new religion. Hence the silence of our Gospels with reference to Essenism, which was weaving its solitary dream, while at Jerusalem the destinies of the whole world were at issue.§

* Γάμον μὲν ὑπεροψία παρ' αὐτούς. (Josephus, "Bell. Jud." II. 8, 2.)

† Εἰς αὐτὸν εὐχάς. (Josephus, "Bell. Jud." II. 8, 5.)

‡ We are unable to subscribe to Ewald's opinions (Gesch. Israel IV., p. 476) and to those of M. Reuss ("Histoire de la littérature au siècle apostolique," I., p. 115), as to the purely Hebraic origin of Essenism.

§ We have refuted, by these observations. Strauss' idea of the connection between primitive Christianity and Essenism. ("Leb. Jesu für das deutsche Volk," p. 175.)

It requires some audacity to maintain that Sadduceeism prepared the way for Christianity by enlarging the mind.* A singular method, truly, of preparation for a religion of self-renunciation, was that of perverting souls and sapping in the conscience the basis upon which alone it could be founded. The Sadducees found in Herod a king after their own heart, a stranger to any true scruples, the parasite of the foreigner, the sworn enemy of the fervid devotion which gives birth to agitation and opposition, a sacrilegist never hesitating to elevate his creatures to the priesthood. Such a ruler was well suited to those men of pleasure, who desired only the material advantages of power. Josephus shows at its just value the pretended breadth of spirit of the Sadducees, when he complains of their haughty and almost savage arrogance. None has a narrower and harder heart than the voluptuous egotist, who looks at humanity only with a view to the advantage he may extract from it. The Sadducees religiously followed the maxim of their founder, Zadok—"Sever not thyself from the majority." Not thus are religious heroes tempered.

The Pharisees, although excluded by Herod from high offices, exercise, nevertheless, a paramount influence. They are the direct inheritors of that severe and exalted Judaism by which religion was restored on the return from the exile, only calculation has succeeded to fervour, and dry and scenic devotion to sincere piety; holiness is no longer anything but a means to success, it becomes hypocrisy by its display; it is no longer the life of the soul, but spends itself in vestments, gestures, and attitudes. It founds a school, and becomes the watchword of a religious *coterie*. No doubt some upright, though mistaken souls there are among the Pharisees, but, taken as a whole, their party is given up to the letter, to forms and ceremonies; it confounds interests and beliefs, and pursues earthly ends by religious means, which is the worst of all profanations. Its greatness is in its inflexible patriotism, which may lead it even

* "Leb. Jesu für das deutsche Volk," p. 178.

to heroism, and which, meanwhile, assures to it a moral authority over a people, whose idol it is, because it shares their passions. If we would know the opinions which prevailed in Judæa at this period, it is to the Pharisees we must look for the answer.

VI. The movement of thought in Palestine before the birth of Jesus Christ.*

We have seen how, from the time of the religious restoration under Ezra, and the extinction of the spirit of prophecy, the doctor or rabbi became the foremost personage of the Judaism of the decline. A complete summary of his doctrine is given in the famous precept— "*Set a hedge about the law, and make many disciples.*"† In other words, preserve the national institutions by a rigorous tradition, and teach this tradition in numerous schools. "Tradition is the check of the law," say the rabbis again.‡ Nothing could be better adapted

* Our first source of knowledge is, of course, the New Testament; then Josephus, who is so rich in information as to the doctrine of his contemporaries. The Talmud may be used, but cautiously. We find in it a complete collection of Pharisaic tradition, under its two forms the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*. It may be inferred, from allusions and quotations by several of the Fathers, among others by Origen ("De Principiis," Delarue Edition, vol. I, p 179), that an important part of the *Mishna* was in existence before the end of the third century: we find in the *Mishna* an evident allusion to Adrian's war of extermination against the Jews. Whenever we find a precept which is a development of the Pharisaic doctrines, such as they are represented to us in the Gospel, we may consider it as going back in date to the Judaism of the time of Christ. A more certain source of information is found in the two Targums of Onkelos and of Jonathan. These are Aramaic translations, or rather paraphrases, of the most important portions of the Old Testament. Both suppose the existence of the Levitical worship, and must, consequently be antecedent to the destruction of Jerusalem. Talmudic tradition makes Onkelos a disciple of Hillel, and Jonathan of Gamaliel. We borrow our quotations of the Talmud and the Targums from Gfrœrer ("Jahrhundert des Heils.") We have, also, drawn largely from "Pirke Aboth, or the Books of Principles," the summary of the moral portion of the Talmud, of which we have already spoken.

† "Pirke Aboth," p. 483.

‡ Ibid, pp. 483-503.

than such a maxim to exalt their own importance. This revolution is completely achieved in the time of Herod. The doctor boldly claims his place on the highest seat of the hierarchy, and above the prophet.* The Targums do not scruple to apply to him the glorious promises of the Old Testament. Onkelos renders in the following terms the famous prophecy of Jacob about Shiloh :—"Neither the prince, *nor the scribe*, shall depart from Judah till the coming age." If Joseph is the favourite of his father, it is because he is a doctor. If men are commanded to stand before the hoary head, it is because this indicates a man versed in the study of the law.† The rabbi declares loudly that he wears a crown; he calls himself a king. "There are three crowns," said Rabbi Simeon; "the crown of the law, the crown of the pontificate, and that of royalty."‡ That of the doctor is placed in the first rank. "His crown is above that of the king," says the Talmud. "Eternal gratitude is due to him who has taught a single commandment, a single letter of the law."§ The pride of the scribe rises to such a point that it concludes by seeing in heaven only a school of rabbis; and God Himself appears to him clothed with the rabbinical insignia.‖ The authority of the doctor knows no bounds. His disciples are at his feet; he claims from them blind and absolute submission. "Take thy master for thy guide," says Gamaliel, "that thou mayest not fall into doubt. He who forgets a single point of doctrine may be esteemed on the road to ruin."¶ Soon tradition is unhesitatingly placed above Scripture. The rabbi declares that there is danger in reading freely the sacred books, because the disciple may be led to place greater confidence in them than in the words of his master. The Talmud is to be read twice as much as the Bible. Honouring the master is the same thing as honouring God.**

To increase their reputation, the rabbis gave their instructions

* Gfrœrer, I., p 142.
† "Pirke Aboth," pp. 488-531.
‡ Ibid p. 511.
§ "Pirke Aboth," p. 531.
‖ Gfrœrer, I., p. 278.
¶ "Pirke Aboth," pp. 489-501.
** Gfrœrer, I., pp. 150, 151.

gratuitously; on this account it was that each of them was bound to learn a trade. "All study of the law, not accompanied with the exercise of a calling, is vain and leads to dissipation." This disinterestedness was often more apparent than real, for these illustrious doctors found plentiful indemnification in the large sums of money, which were voluntarily presented to them, or in the favour of rich families, with whom they frequently contracted unions.

Their first care was to organise schools. Each of these had at its head a regular master; he was seated on a raised chair, and his hearers ranged themselves before him in a semicircle.

"At five years of age," says the Talmud, "the sacred studies should be commenced; at ten, the youth should devote himself to tradition; at thirteen, he should know and fulfil the commandments of the Lord; at fifteen, he should perfect his studies." "Cease not," it says elsewhere, "the study of the law, for everything is comprised in it; it will give thee all true knowledge. Continue in this study, forsake it not, for thou canst undertake nothing better. The recompense will be proportioned to the toil."

"He who devotes himself to holy studies, should not suffer himself to be distracted by anything on the way; he should not say as he travels, 'This tree is graceful; that tract of country is beautiful,' but should be entirely absorbed. That which is learned in youth is like writing traced upon new parchment. He who is taught by an old man is like one, who eats ripe grapes and drinks old wine."*

The disciple who had passed the first degree of learning took his seat at the foot of the doctoral chair, and had the right to speak. It was needful to pass the third degree of initiation to become a rabbi. The memory had to be singularly exercised to retain the medley of Pharisaic traditions, which were not fixed in writing. The disciple promised not to change one iota of that which was transmitted to him, under pain of being

* "Pirke Aboth," II., pp. 513-527.

untrue to God Himself, and of drawing down the malediction of the chosen people. "He who gives explanations, not in conformity with tradition, shall have no part in the future world, even though he have well understood the law, and done many good works." Nothing can give a just idea of the complicated puerility of such teaching, weaving, as it does, mere spiders' webs in the vacuum of thought. Subtilty which knew no bounds was the reigning genius. It spent itself in the most absurd use of the allegorical, and turned the plainest texts into enigmatical ciphers.

The tribunals were of three degrees. The lowest was a small court of justice, composed of three persons, which regulated pecuniary difficulties in places of minor importance; the second was composed of twenty-three members, and judged personal offences. The great Sanhedrim was the high court of appeal. It consisted of seventy one members, and sat in the Temple: it had a president, a vice-president, and two secretaries. It renewed itself. Its importance diminished from the time of the annexation to the Roman Empire; it disappeared during the war, but was reconstituted afterwards at Tiberias. At the time of Christ, it pronounced real decisions in matters of doctrine and discipline, and fulminated excommunications in sternest language.

The rabbis, not content with sitting in the tribunals, and watching over the strict maintenance of tradition, further charged themselves with the instruction of the people; they multiplied schools throughout the country; they devoted to contempt all who did not attend, and likened them to brute animals.* No moral authority, then, was to be compared, at the time of Christ, with that of the doctors of the law. It was so much the greater that it was not confined, like the priest's, to one caste; every Jew might aspire to this office, or, rather, to this kingship of divine wisdom. The scribe held minds captive in the fetters of an entirely mechanical system. He imposed that which he

* Gfrœrer, I., p. 190.

had himself passively received, and made himself the first slave of the doctrine of death, of which he was the organ. Not in such a school, certainly, will the meek and gentle Teacher be formed, who is to bring to the world truth simple enough for the understanding of the unlettered and the child.

If we pass from the organization of the schools to the groundwork itself of their teaching, the opposition between the new religion and Pharisaic tradition will strike us no less forcibly. Is the future of the chosen people in question? The synagogue, instead of admitting an extension of the divine covenant, which may render it capable of embracing all mankind, ignores the clearest oracles of the great Hebrew prophets, and exalts beyond all bounds the national privileges of the Jews. "All Israel," we read in the Pirke Aboth, "has part in the world to come; thus it is written, 'All Thy people shall have for ever in inheritance this land of my own planting.'"* It is enough, then, to be descended from the fathers by simple historical sonship, in order to share in the glories of the future. The national pride utters itself sometimes with fierce energy, as in this expression of the Talmud:—"Each Israelite is worth more before God than all the people who have been or shall be."† Truly it was hard for Christian universalism to grow in such a soil!

Pharisaism does not admit the possibility of a revelation superior to that of Sinai; it makes Moses a being truly divine. He was only a man when he fled before Pharaoh, but he was a god when he conquered him, and above all when he came down from the Mount.‡ Josephus does not hesitate to ascribe to him a nature more than human. This apotheosis of Moses was a bad preparation for the reception of a new covenant. The doctors of the law carried back their traditions to the great day of Sinai. They pretended that the seventy elders named by the first legislator had received the deposit of tradition, and had handed it down to successive sanhedrims: thus the law was proclaimed eternal and immutable in all its parts.

* "Pirke Aboth," p. 481. † Gfrœrer, I., 214. ‡ Ibid.

"The law," says the Talmud, "which was created for the Israelites will endure for ever and ever.* No prophet has the right to change anything in it."†

If there is an acknowledged fact, in our day, it is that the idea of God had undergone a wide modification among the Jews, in the time preceding the Christian era, not only at Alexandria, where Platonic influence predominated, but also in Palestine. There was a deeper impression than ever of the incomprehensibleness of God. He was removed to an inaccessible height. To judge from the Talmud, Gamaliel seems to have expressed himself more decidedly than any of his predecessors, on the impossibility of our knowing the dwelling-place of the Almighty. The conclusion from this incomprehensibleness of God was, that He could not reveal Himself to, nor have any direct communication with, man. Thus the numerous instances of theophany in the Old Testament became a scandal, and the sacred narratives were unscrupulously tampered, with to bring them into harmony with this new theory; wherever the text spoke of a direct manifestation of God, an angel was substituted, or the sacred cloud, which was called the *Shekina.*‡ This tendency, so marked in the translation of the Septuagint, is not less evident in the Targums, which date from the first century of the Christian era. Thus when Jacob exclaims that he has seen the Lord face to face,§ Onkelos makes him say, "*I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.*" Where the text runs, "They saw the God of Israel,‖ the paraphrase renders it, "*They saw the glory of God.*" Where it is said that Moses beheld the face of the Lord, the Targum uses the expression, "*He saw the image, the likeness of the glory of God.*"

The Shekina is not to be mistaken for a direct revelation of God. It is not God Himself, but only a partial and even

* Gfrœrer, I., p. 234. † Ibid. p. 235.
‡ See Nicolas. Work quoted, p. 116.
§ Gen. xxxii. 3. ‖ Ex. xxiv. 10.

sensible manifestation of His existence. He is not personally present by it in the midst of His people; it is a pledge of His love, but He is not Himself in any way enshrined in the sacred cloud. The Shekina is represented in the Targum as a cloud. "A cloud," we read in Onkelos, "covered the tabernacle of His glory. The Shekina of the Lord filled it." Josephus gives the same definition of it: "It was a cloud, not heavy and grey like the clouds of wintry and rainy days, but light and transparent, filling the temple."*

The inference is, that the Shekina was designed to obviate the scandal of a direct theophany.

The Targums set aside no less scrupulously all assimilation, even the most distant, between man and Deity. Thus when God says, after Adam had eaten of the tree of knowledge, "*He is become one of us*," Onkelos modifies the text thus, "Behold Adam is *unique* in the world." The commentator is scandalised at the words of the serpent to Eve, "*Ye shall be as gods*;" and makes Him say, "You shall be happy as princes." This marked repugnance to everything, that tends to an approximation between humanity and Deity, is very significant. "The personal and corporeal appearances of Deity," says M. Reuss, "did not accord with a speculative theory, which was already widely developed."† Assuredly, the distance was great between such a point of view, and that pre-eminent instance of theophany—the incarnation of the Son of God. If mention is made of the *Logos*, or of the Word of God in the Targums, He is only allowed to be like the Shekina, a partial manifestation of Deity.

The Jewish schools gave the preference in discussions to everything that related to anthropology. The Pharisees accepted the idea of original sin, which they often supplemented by the theory of pre-existence; they gave great scope to Divine action in human life, and even inclined to a sort of religious

* Josephus, "Antiquities," VIII., 4.
† Reuss, "History of Christian Theology," I., p. 83.

fatalism. With regard to morals, properly so called, more than one admirable precept may be gleaned from the Talmud. It lays down the rule that we should not do to others what we would not have done to us, and that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. Still, the spirit which animates these rules of conduct is in perfect harmony with what we know of Pharisaism; the leading principle is an essentially interested one. A man must do good like a mercenary to create merit for himself, and to purchase his share of happiness. Whoever shall have fulfilled the law, shall come at the last day and receive his reward. Consider for whom thou dost work, and what is the Master who will pay thee thy wages."* Those who feed the poor will obtain the pardon of their sins, as if they had brought a sacrifice to the altar.† Repentance itself is only a means of atoning for faults. "Three things will make thee prosper—prayer, alms, and penitence." The prayer must not be short; he who lengthens out his prayer will not be sent empty away. Certain forms give a peculiar value to prayer. Thus the holiest actions, those which ought to be the most spontaneous are entered in this current account between man and God, so accurately kept by the Pharisees.

Faith is regarded as a meritorious work. "What is the cause of the joy of the saints?" we read in the Talmud. "It is the *merit* of the faith shown by our fathers during life. Great is faith before God, for by its merit the Holy Spirit has made Israel his habitation."‡ This faith is purely an intellectual act. "He who forgets a single point of doctrine is pronounced to be running to his ruin." The Pharisaic maxims, those especially that are ascribed to Hillel, are sometimes like precious pearls, but the thread on which they are strung is a low and unworthy thought. Ceremonial is placed in the same rank with the precepts of eternal morality. Pestilence sweeps the universe, because the Sabbatic year has not been rigidly observed. Exile is the punishment of idolatry, of incest,

* "Pirke Aboth," p. 495. † Ibid. p. 154. ‡ Ibid. p. 560.

murder, and of the violation of the Sabbath.* A casuistry descending into the smallest details, of which the gospels furnish numerous examples, is substituted for the law of holiness. The observance of the Sabbath pushed to the most ridiculous exaggerations, becomes the essence of religion; strict conformity in this respect is enough to atone for the greatest sins. God pardons him who keeps the Sabbath. The full observance of two Sabbaths would have saved Israel.

A dry orthodoxy and a dead formalism—this is the summary of Pharisaic morality. The result is hypocrisy, a pre-occupation of soul with the external and visible to the detriment of true piety. Attendance at the feasts is considered an efficacious means of salvation; the Feast of Atonement really expiates sin; circumcision introduces into the kingdom of heaven. The piety of the fathers redounds to the children, who draw upon their supererogatory merits as upon an ever open treasury.† The rabbis sacrifice everything to the external. They will not have confession of sins, if it may injure their caste; they unscrupulously counsel dissimulation to any of their number who may have committed a serious fault. "The rabbi," we read in a fragment of the Talmud, "should avoid walking in haste; he should advance slightly bending, and with bowed head. He should not converse with a woman, not even with his wife. When the evil nature has got the better of the man, let him go into a place where he is unknown, let him put on sombre garments and cover himself with a black veil, and then let him do what his heart commands, so that he dishonours not publicly the name of God."‡

Truly the founder of a spiritual worship had nothing to learn from these men of false and empty forms; he could only pronounce just and solemn condemnation on the spirit of traffic in holy things, more dangerous and more culpable when applied

* "Pirke Aboth," p. 521. † Gfrœrer, II., p. 170.
‡ Gfrœrer, II., pp. 166, 167.

to the salvation of the soul, than when instigating the most shameless simony.

The age which saw the birth of Messiah was quivering with mysterious expectation. The often-quoted words of Suetonius about the universal ruler, who was to come from the East, are only an echo of the feverish hopes of the Jews. But closely regarded, these hopes were then more imbued than ever with a political and theocratic character. The materialistic tendency which we have pointed out in the apocryphal books, reached its culminating point precisely on the eve of the great event, which was to give them the most signal contradiction. We find it faithfully expressed in the various passages of the gospels, which bring before us the contemporaries of Christ; it is fully displayed in the Targums, in the oldest portions of the Talmud, and above all, in the great apocalypses like the book of Enoch and the fourth book of Esdras. The expected Messiah is to be a mighty King, the descendant of David.* The town of Bethlehem is at once pointed out as his birth-place by the doctors whom Herod consults,† and who are the faithful echo of the Targums of the period. Great sorrows are to precede the advent of the deliverer; he will have Elias or one of the prophets as his immediate forerunner.‡ He is often represented under the image of a new Moses; he is to be the prophet, like the prophet of Sinai, whose appearance is predicted in Deuteronomy; and miracles are looked for from him, similar to those in the desert.§ His first work will be to restore the national glory of the Jews, to reconquer the sacred soil of Palestine, and to restore the kingdom to Israel after having purified the people of God by repentance.‖ Such are the essential features of the picture. They are reproduced in the Targums of the time. These also ascribe to Messiah descent from David, birth at Bethlehem, a renovating influence upon the people, and the deliverance of the ten

* Mark xii. 35. † Matt. ii. 5. ‡ Mark ix. 11; vi. 15; John i. 21.
§ John vi. 31. ‖ Acts i. 6.

tribes.* They add that Messiah will engage in a supreme conflict with the power of evil, symbolised by the mysterious names of Gog and Magog.†

The rabbis place in the second line, and as it were in the perspective of the picture, all their apocalyptic imaginations. They make the great crisis which is to precede the end of the world, coincide with the era of Messiah; sometimes they attribute to Him the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment; sometimes they make His reign the precursor of the final scenes in which God will enact the principal part. They hesitate between a general resurrection, and a resurrection of the just alone.‡ But they are unanimous in seeing in the future only a brilliant triumph of Judaism, in which the nations may no doubt participate, but subordinately, and as it were in the train of the sons of Abraham. "How beautiful is Messiah the king!" we read in a Targum of later date, which is, however, a faithful echo of Pharisaic tradition; "He has girded His loins; He has set the battle in array against His enemies; He has reddened the mountains with the blood of His adversaries."§ The Pharisees take literally the image of a new temple and a new Jerusalem. They extol the glory of Messiah, but wherever there is an apparent ascription to Him of pre-existence and of Deity, we may be convinced there has been some Christian interpolation, or, as in the fourth book of Esdras, the trace of the indirect influence of primitive Christianity. The idea of a suffering Messiah is in flagrant contradiction with their system. The possibility of suffering is only admitted with reference to a second Messiah, who appears in some of their wildest traditions, and who is to devote himself for the deliverance of the ten tribes.‖

* Targum, Jonathan on Micah, v. 2. † Gfrœrer II., p. 215.
‡ Ibid, II. p. 232. § Ibid, p. 246.
‖ "Morietur hic Messias." Gfrœrer II, pp. 259–261. A trace of this idea is to be found in the words of the Jew Trypho to Justin. ("Dial. cum. Tryph.," c. lxviii.)

This fundamental idea is invested with strange symbols in that curious book of Enoch, the first outline of which may be traced up to the time of the Maccabees, but which was enriched and modified in the succeeding period.* The intention of the unknown author was evidently to counteract the Sadduceean tendency; he wished to combat that sort of Jewish epicurism, which removed God to the greatest possible distance from the world, and set aside His intervention alike in nature and in history. Desirous of filling the universe with the Divine

* "Das Buch Enoch übersetzt und erklärt," von Dillmann. Leipzig, 1853. The Greek fragments, published by Syncellus, have been collected in the second volume of the "Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Testamenti" of Fabricius. It is difficult to fix the date of the book of Enoch with certainty. The chronological data taken from the calculation of weeks in the ninety-third chapter, are always open to the charge of arbitrariness, as there is no fixed element for the valuation of the symbolic numbers. Ewald and Dillmann see in chapter xc. a clear allusion to Johannes Hyrcanus, who is the valiant lamb with the terrible and victorious horn. But it is quite possible that, after the manner of the prophets, Johannes Hyrcanus was cited after his death as a type of the future deliverer, rather than as himself the Messiah. The son of Maccabeus would play in such an apocalypse the part of David in ancient prophecy. That the book was extant before Christ is evidenced by the quotation in Jude—(v. 14) Some features appear to point to the time of the Herods; the most significant seems to me that in chap. lvi.:—"In those days the angels shall be gathered together, and their chiefs shall turn towards the east, towards the Parthians and the Medes, to excite a movement among the kings of those countries." These nations are to be stirred up to invade Judæa. Now, the invasion of the Parthians actually took place thirty-seven years before Christ. They drove away the high priest Hyrcanus, with his protectors, Herod the Great and his brother. (Gfrœrer I., p. 100. Lücke "Offenbar. Johann.," I., 251.) We are therefore much disposed to place the book of Enoch in the very century of Jesus Christ. It appears to us evident that chapter lxiii. has been altered into the Christian sense. The Messiah in the original was represented as pre-existing in the thought of God, according to the doctrine of absolute predestination. Thence, to attribute to him, by a few additions which were supposed to be merely explanations, actual pre-existence was but a step. We have, beside, clear proof of an after-touch in chapter xc. To the description of the white bull, as an image of the Messiah, is added —"He was the Word." (See Dillmann, p. 65.)

activity, he gives us a sort of fantastic theory of physics, which admits no natural causes, but multiplies everywhere the direct agents of Deity, and peoples space with myriads of angels charged with the various functions of nature. Enoch, the great saint of the patriarchal age, is chosen to become the revealer of these mysteries of the world; translated in a remote age into the clouds, he is able to traverse the obscure regions veiled from our eyes by visible appearances. The author teaches not only the doctrine of angels, but also that of demons; these are the spirits of the giants sprung from the union of fallen angels with the daughters of men. The revelations vouchsafed to Enoch, whether in his peregrinations through space, or in his visions, bear principally on God's plan with regard to man. History is only the unfolding of His eternal designs; all that has become apparent in the course of time existed before the ages in His thought. This ideal pre-existence is naturally attributed first of all to Messiah, who is to be His great representative upon earth. He is to be born in the bosom of the Jewish people, that chosen object of Divine favour. He is called the Son of man, and righteousness dwells with Him. "He shall awake from their sleep the kings and the strong ones of the earth, and overturn the mighty from their seats: He shall break the teeth of the wicked. He shall expel kings from their kingdoms, because they have not hearkened to and honoured Him. He shall fill the strong with confusion; darkness shall be their dwelling, and worms their resting-place. They shall be driven from the habitations of His people. Then shall the prayer of the just, and the cry of their blood, mount up to heaven."* Messiah is not only to preside at the last judgment, He is also to raise the dead. In those days earth and hell shall yield up that which has been committed to them. The Son of man will gather around Him the just, the saints, for the day of their salvation will be come. The mountains shall skip like rams, and the hills like lambs

* Book of Enoch, xlvi.

that have been satisfied with milk. "Neither gold nor iron shall save the wicked in presence of the great Elect of God: they shall melt before him like honey before the fire. He will be seated upon the throne of justice: he will judge all the acts of the saints which are in heaven, and weigh them in his balances. The kings and the mighty ones will own him, seated upon the throne of glory; they will know that it is no more possible to utter before him vain words. Then grief will come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child. They will look one upon another, and be in fear, when they see this son of a woman upon the throne of glory. The angels of justice will seize them to punish them, for having evil-entreated the children of God and his elect, and they will be a spectacle to the righteous. They will cry: 'O that thou wouldest give us rest, that we might praise and magnify the King of kings. We sigh for rest, and we find none; our light has gone out, and darkness is our eternal habitation, because we have not believed in him, but have put our hope in the sceptre of our royalty and in our glory.'"* In contrast with this terrible punishment of the great ones of the heathen, Enoch describes the bliss of the elect, in whom we recognise the children of Israel; he shows them to us seated at the feast of God, clothed in bright raiment, and tasting pleasures that know no end.

The same ideas reappear under other figures in the famous ninetieth chapter, which closes the symbolical sketch of the history of the holy nation. Israel is likened to a flock of sheep, led successively by seventy shepherds, who represent the foreign kings counted from the exile. The pagan nations which trampled on God's elect are compared to ravens and eagles. These birds of prey wound and blind the unhappy flock, till the day when a few of the young and valiant sheep separate from the rest, and victoriously fight agaist their oppressors. Here is an evident allusion to the Maccabees, who are represented as the forerunners of Messiah. One of these courageous

* Book of Enoch, lxii.

sheep has a great horn, which the birds of prey endeavour, but vainly, to break. The reign of Messiah commences, but it is not fully described, because the author has previously sufficiently expanded this part of his subject: this reign is designated the *era of the sword.*

The fallen angels undergo their punishment; each sheep receives a sword, and kills the ravenous creatures. As soon as the judgment begins, the Son of man writes down the names of the sheep, and opens before God the book of life. What other than Messiah could on such a day enact so important a part?* The fallen angels, symbolised by stars, are the first to be thrown into the place of condemnation; then the seventy shepherds are put to death, and plunged into flaming deeps. The unfaithful sheep share the same fate. A new temple rises on the ruins of the old; it is infinitely richer and more splendid. The elect sheep there fix their abode, and receive the homage of all the other animals; they are whiter than snow, and their eyes are opened. The sword which had been given them has become useless; they lay it down in the sanctuary. Messiah reappears, in this glorious era, under the form of a white bull with large black horns. The meaning of these distorted symbols is plain; they represent the triumph of the Jewish theocracy, at the close of a terrible conflict inaugurated by Messiah; his reign is to be pre-eminently that of the sword. Certainly, the Jewish dream never found a more brilliant and passionate expression than this.

* M. Colani will not recognise the Messiah in this portion of the book of Enoch, the only one which appears to him positively Jewish. ("Jésus Christ et les Croyances Messianiques." Introduction, p. 22.) He takes his stand on the evident re-touchings of the similitudes; but these re-touchings are not sufficient to take away all their value. He maintains that the date of these similitudes is clearly indicated by the allusion to the thermal baths, placed in volcanic spots, and where the great of the earth give themselves up to all voluptuousness; but the chapter to which this passage belongs is part of a fragment subsequently interpolated, which contains the revelation of Noah on the deluge. (Dillmann, p. 200.)

The fourth book of Esdras belongs to a later period; it dates from the troublous times between the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, and the sanguinary repression of the revolt of Bar-Cocheba.* But it may be considered as an authentic product of the synagogue, as the faithful expression of the Pharisaic spirit in its invariable type. Esdras is the scribe *par excellence;* he has drunk the fiery cup of inspiration,† and is the chosen organ of rabbinism. The Pharisee endeavours to raise his Messiah to the height of the Christ of the Gospels, and to this end he borrows, as did in later times the paganism of the decline, from the religion which he anathematises. But it is in

* The fourth book of Esdras is to be found in the second volume of the "Codex Pseudepigraphus" of Fabricius. (See especially the explanatory edition of M. Volkmar—Zurich, 1863). The author has very ingeniously endeavoured to fix the date of the book, by means of the famous vision of the eagle (c. xi. and xii.) which, as always, is the type of the Roman power. The symbolical eagle has twice six wings, three heads, then three under-wings. By former critics, twelve wings were counted, that is to say twelve Roman Emperors, taking literally the words *twice six wings;* and there was the utmost difficulty in not placing the fourth book of Esdras sufficiently far on in the second century. M. Volkmar has reduced these *twice six wings* to six pairs of wings, each pair representing an emperor. We have then only six emperors. He places his reason for this reduction, in the connection between the 26th and 27th verses of chapter xi. In verse 26, the first wing is spoken of in these words—*prima erecta est;* while the second is thus described—*et secundæ velocius quam priores non comparuerunt.* This plural explicative of the singular of verse 26, shows that two wings were equivalent to a single pair of wings, which represents a single emperor. This gives us the six emperors of the Julian family, of whom the last was Nero. The three under-wings are the three usurpers—Otho, Galba, and Vitellius. The three heads are the three emperors, Vespasian, Titus, and Commodus. We are thus brought back to the commencement of the second century for the composition of the book. The two first chapters are an interpolation in the Christian sense The Christology of the fourth book of Esdras was conceived under the influence of the primitive Church. M. Volkmar acknowledges this frankly. Nothing can better prove the importance, which had already been acquired by the Christian metaphysics, which are said to have been invented fifty years later.

† IV. 39.

vain; his Messiah remains fashioned after his own likeness; he is only the representative of the implacable pride of the Pharisee, rearing itself above the smoking walls of the temple. The mass of mankind is represented as a multitude without cause, that is to say without any right to be,—the worthless dregs of the cup of creation.* Creation only exists for the sake of the chosen people, who are the lily and the treasure of the Lord.† If this lily has been torn from its native soil and trodden under foot, it is only for a time. "When the centuries have revolved, my Son, the Messiah, shall be manifested with his own, and he will give four hundred years of bliss to the survivors. He will execute his first judgment on the heathen, and will be to them like a consuming fire. He will bring back the ten tribes of Israel from their dispersion, and reunite the chosen people. After these years, my Son will die as well as all that breathe,‡ and the world will relapse into its ancient silence for seven days. Then the earth will give up those who sleep in her bosom, and the Most High will sit on his throne. Righteousness, truth, and faith will alone endure. God will rejoice in the little company of his elect.§ Here, will he say, is my peculiar people among whom my name has been called. I will not heed the great multitude of them that perish, for they will be justly condemned to hell. Zion shall throw off her weeds, and shall come forth in new beauty." The Roman power under the figure of an eagle is to be laid low in the dust. "Thou hast troubled the meek, thou hast done violence to the men of peace, thou hast loved liars, thou hast overthrown the walls of those who had not wronged thee. Thy wickedness has risen up to the Most High, and thy pride to the mighty God.

* "Residuas gentes dixisti eas nil esse et salivæ assimilatæ sunt." (VI. 56.)

† "Propter nos creatum est seculum. Populus tuus quem vocasti unigenitum." (VI. 56, 57,) "Ex omnibus floribus eligisti tibi lilium tuum." (V. 24.)

‡ "Et morietur filius meus Christus." (VII. 30.)

§ "Multi creati sunt, pauci autem salvati."

The Most High has put an end to thine haughtiness, and the measure of thy crimes is fulfilled. Therefore shalt thou no more be seen, thou eagle with the terrible wings,—neither thy horrid plumes, nor thine accursed heads, nor thy cruel talons, nor thy body naked and despoiled. The whole earth shall be delivered; it shall be snatched from thy violence, and shall put its hope in the justice and mercy of Him who created it."*

The differences between the fourth book of Esdras and the book of Enoch are certainly many; the most important is that in the former, the resurrection and the judgment are reserved to God alone; but the fanatic pride of the Pharisees, their insolent contempt for mankind, their thirst for vengeance, their desire of a terrible revenge on their oppressors, all have equally left their burning mark on this strange book. It is not without beauty, but it shows in its whole depth the chasm, which separates the ideal of Jesus Christ from that of the Jews of His time.

The radical opposition between the two religious movements is further evident from their definitive result. The teaching of Christ is summed up in the Gospel, that of the rabbis in the Talmud. On the one side we have a living history which is wholly imbued with a new spirit, without fixed formulas and without ritual; on the other, a body of confused traditions, a rubric of all the forms of piety, carried into the minutest details. Except the "Pirke Aboth," the book of principles, which contains what may be called the spirit of Pharisaism, the Talmud consists of a series of treatises with reference to the hours and forms of prayer, the classification of offerings, the observance of the feasts and of the sabbath, fasts, vows, purifications, and the practices of daily life. Besides the text or the *Mishna*, comprising a strange medley of traditionary regulations, we have the commentary or the Gemara, which is only a reproduction of the various interpretations of the rabbis. The Talmud never rises to a moral principle which might give an

* Esdras xii. 42–46.

impress of unity to the religious life; it confines itself to outward manifestations which are infinite in their diversity, and endeavours by the multiplicity of regulations to anticipate all imaginable cases. Generalisation and unity are only possible when religion ascends to the first springs of the moral life. The Talmud, which contemplated only the "outside of the cup and the platter," loses itself in the wearisome multiplication of isolated and successive acts. It is nothing more than a puerile ritual, vindicated by a perverted exegesis; it is a stiff-jointed skeleton with no breath of life—the mummification, it might be called, of the religion of the prophets.

It is of no avail to bring forward the name of Hillel, the famous rabbi, who lived a few years before Jesus Christ. His contest with Shamai dwindles to very small proportions, and yet he is one of the fathers of the Talmud. The noble maxims cited from him are encased in the charnel-house of a dry legalism. The chief and most beautiful are the following:—"Imitate the disciples of Aaron; love peace, seek peace, love men, and attach thyself to the study of the law. Do not answer for thy virtue before the day of thy death; do not judge thy neighbour without being able to place thyself in his position. Show thyself a man where a man is wanting. He who seeks fame loses it. He who uses his crown of knowledge as a tool, soon forfeits it."* On close examination the spirit of caste is very evident in Hillel; he did not rise above the idea of earthly retribution. He it is, who seeing a skull floating on the water, exclaims, "Because thou hast drowned, thou hast been drowned; and they who have drowned thee will be drowned in their turn."† He shared the rabbinical infatuation. "He who has gained the knowledge of the law," he said, "has procured for himself eternal life." A religious movement must be judged by its general direction, and not by such and such an isolated manifestation. Looking at the subject in this light, it would be impossible seriously to establish a parallel between the

* "Pirke Aboth," p. 481–491. † Ibid.

doctrine of Christ and that of the rabbis. Between the two influences rises the Cross of Calvary. There is kinship between the two religions, but every attempt to melt them into one is foredoomed to failure.

The form taken by the doctrine of good and evil angels in Jewish theology, from the time of the exile, is well known. It connected itself with some of the oldest portions of holy Scripture, as for example the account of the fall in Genesis; it was doubtless a branch of the tree of Hebraic revelations, but its growth had become diseased under foreign influences. The book of Enoch furnishes abundant evidence of this. The reader is lost among minute classifications, overlaid with absurd inventions. Every element, every part of the earth, every nation has its guardian angel. The book of Tobit gives such a guardian to each pious Israelite. As to the bad angels, they are supposed to be the spirits of giants sprung from the adulterous union of the sons of God with the daughters of men; they wander over the world, "seeking rest and finding none." According to other rabbinical traditions, more in conformity with the account in Genesis, demons are likened to the fallen angels who contributed to the ruin of man. Impressed and terrified by the mysterious power of evil spirits, the Jews multiplied forms of exorcism and incantation. They ascribed a peculiar value to certain books attributed to Solomon. Although the popular imagination may have greatly exaggerated the instances of possession, it would be hard to deny that, in these critical times, the mysterious action of evil spirits made itself felt in an especial manner. We shall return to this difficult subject in speaking of the miracles of Jesus. In any case, the solemn consciousness of a formidable conflict, between the power of good and the dark and subtle world, which encompasses ours, is a characteristic feature of this period.

Pharisaic Judaism was not content with dreams of a brilliant future of glory and terrestrial happiness; it endeavoured again and again to realise its visions. Hence the ready success of

those political agitators, who sought to re-enact the part of the Maccabees and ended as common rebels. The most notable was Judas of Gamala in Galilee, of whom Gamaliel speaks in his address to the Sanhedrim.* Closely united to the Pharisaic faction, he pretended to revive theocratic piety by restoring it to entire conformity with the Pentateuch; it was an attempt at enfranchisement, in harmony with the prejudices of the people, and carried out sword in hand. That which had been undertaken with the sword perished by the sword.† Such was also the fate of Theudas, also mentioned by Gamaliel, who tried to overthrow the golden eagle which Herod had placed on the gate of the temple, and who stirred up a revolt at Jerusalem which cost him his life. He was an eminent Pharisee, who had great influence in his youth; he sought to re-establish religion in its purity, and to break the foreign yoke.‡

Between the fanatics who endeavoured to realise by force of arms their ardent dream of religious restoration, and the Sadducees, ready to sell their country to the stranger, there was a certain number of men of marked character who avoided both extremes, and united a moderate patriotism with great religious indifference; they are perfectly represented by the historian Josephus, that politic Pharisee who took part in the war of independence, but went over in time to the conqueror. He appears in the undoubted character of the citizen of an illustrious country; he exalts its glory with complacency, but he obliterates all the religious grandeur of Judaism, and comprehends nothing of its distinctive character; in his history

* Acts v. 37. † Josephus, Ant. xviii. 1—6.

‡ According to Josephus ("Bell Jud." I. 332), he was called Matthias, which may be translated by the Greek Theodas or Theudas (Gift of God). He must not be confounded with the Theudas of whom Josephus speaks ("Antiquities" XI. 5, 1), who revolted under Fadus—that is, forty-four years after Christ, and after the death of Gamaliel. There is nothing to compel us to attribute to St. Luke a chronological error, quite inconceivable in him.

there is no breathing after the future, and the hope of Messiah sinks into the mere ambition of a people, eager for aggrandisement. Josephus certainly mentions the miracles—but he has never grasped the principle of all miracle, the sovereign intervention of God in our destinies for the accomplishment of a vast design. He illustrates his narrative by prodigies like Titus Livius or Tacitus; but he does not rise above a cold, classic history.

We have hitherto spoken only of official Judaism at the time of Christ, the Judaism which reigned in the schools and in the temple. The pure religion of the Old Testament had also its representatives, even in this age of decline. More than one heart was waiting for the fulfilment of the promises, without mingling in its hopes any earthly passion. We shall see this little body of the moral elect of the nation (whom we shall have to seek among the humble and despised, or at least in the most obscure ranks of Jewish society), reaching the crowning point of the religious development of the old covenant, and gathering the ripened fruit of that long work of preparation which commenced at the fall. The sufferings and bitternesses of the time, strengthened and purified their holy aspirations. If the work of preparation resulted in the pagan world, in disengaging from all religions and all philosophies one grand ideal, not to be realised by unaided human powers, has not Judaism the same issue? But there is here more than a simple aspiration; there is a glorious promise, the sacred legacy of the fathers. The decline of Judaism proves, that it could not find the fulfilment of the promise within itself. All attempts to realise its ideal, within the enclosure of Judaism, deplorably misrepresent it. Therefore right hearts and pious, in the midst of long obscurity, are panting after a great Divine manifestation. Thus they offer to Jesus that point of contact, without which there would be no moral link between Him and the race He came to represent and save.

CHAPTER IV.

SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST.

BEFORE tracing the life of Jesus Christ, it is necessary to determine whether the sources, from which we shall draw our narrative, are pure or corrupted, whether what they give is history or legend. Bold critics maintain that it is more easy for us to know Socrates than Jesus, because, say they, we have not, in order to reach the Greek philosopher, to traverse the opaque medium of superstitions. Plato and Xenophon were the immediate disciples of the Athenian sage; they did not make a god of him, and allowed events to appear in their true colour.* If this be so, we must abandon the hope of forming any just idea of the sources of Christianity. We believe, however, on the contrary, that Jesus Christ is better known to us than Socrates, and that His disciples, bound by a respect full of adoration for his person, have not permitted themselves the licence so largely used by Plato, of transforming the teaching of their master under pretext of enriching it. They saw in Him the Son of God, and, therefore, were constrained to preserve intact that which He did and said. We have in this their persuasion, a guarantee for their scrupulous exactness; for what can be added to that which is believed to be divine? All we need then to know is, whether we still possess the primitive tradition, whether what we have before us is a direct and sincere testimony. It will be easy to establish that no history, our enemies themselves being judges, rests on more irrefragable documents than the Gospel history. We ask for it but the

* Strauss, "Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet," p. 662.

common rights of criticism; it is enough for us that it be not made the subject of exceptional rules, the application of which would overthrow the best authenticated facts. To demand, before admitting the authenticity of a writing, not only direct quotations in a contemporary book, but also multiplied attestations that these quotations are neither mutilated nor invented, is to accept as history nothing but legal documents and official patents.* The "Commentaries" of Cæsar and the "Annals" of Tacitus would not stand such tests; for there is no effective resource against the scepticism, which is rather a diseased state of the mind than an active exercise of the reason. Inability to draw a conclusion ought to be carefully distinguished from free and conscientious inquiry.

I. General proofs of the reality of the Gospel history.

In all history it is needful to distinguish the essential facts, the main points which stand out at the first glance from the particular facts, the details which alone give colour and life to the narrative. There are then two distinct kinds of evidence; first of all, a direct testimony, then one more vague and general, which is like the echo in the distance of an important event. Every great historical event naturally extends beyond the narrow circle in which it originates, it has an influence on the world and leaves traces of itself, more or less deeply marked. This double testimony is not wanting to primitive Christianity. Besides its adherents and apostles, who alone can make known to us its true nature, it has from its commencement, left its trace on Jewish and Pagan literature, so as to put beyond a question the reality of its appearance. The men who hated and despised it have at least guaranteed its character as history; it will be well to hear their testimony before that of its authentic organs.

It is certain that from the first year of the second century, the new religion had not only grown in the land of Judæa

* Strauss, pp. 40, 41.

which was its cradle, but had also spread in the Roman Empire and had acquired sufficient importance in Asia Minor to lead Pliny the Younger, proconsul of Bithynia, to refer to it in a famous letter to the Emperor, in which he describes not without uneasiness its progress and its triumphs, and inquires of Trajan how he is to comport himself towards this strange sect, at once submissive to the civil laws and rebellious to the gods. The keen eye of the governor perceives from the first, the close bond which attaches the sect to the person of its founder; he discerns that the memory of Christ, or rather the adoration, pledged to Him, is the very soul of the religion which bears His name.* Thus this high dignitary of the empire, this free-thinker, declares to his master that a new moral power, full of victorious energy, has arisen in the old Asiatic world, and that it owns the name of Jesus Christ. Evidently a cause is needed to explain results so mighty; it is clear that this man, whom Pliny contents himself with naming (while admitting that to his disciples he is a God), must have acquired an incomparable ascendancy over them. Some great event must have happened half a century before, in that corner of Judæa from whence this irresistible movement sprang. It is not an exaggeration of the import of this testimony to interpret it thus.

To it may be added the evidence of two other witnesses which, while far less exact, is of great importance from its date. The first is that of Suetonius. The historian of the Cæsars, while failing to distinguish the new religion from the ancient faith out of which it arose, confirms at least the fact that the name of Jesus had occasioned a ferment of agitation in the heart of Judaism.† The second testimony is drawn from the famous passage of Tacitus on the first of the persecutions. In spite of the scorn which the haughty Roman lavishes on the ignoble sect,—in which he lashes that desire for novelty and

* "Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere." (Pliny, lib. X. epist. 98.)
† "Judæos, impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulit." (Suetonius, "Claudius." 25.)

that passion for strange religions which assail the ancient Roman constitution and add to the anarchy of the inglorious age, which he stigmatises as he chronicles it—it is easy to perceive that the Christians towards the year 65 formed, in a vast city in which nothing could awake astonishment, a party numerous enough to fix attention and draw down public animadversion; the head of this party is plainly one Christ, who was put to death under the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pilate;* from this crucified criminal the sect has taken its name—a fact which sufficiently reveals the strength of his authority over it. The religion of the Crucified was then established at Rome thirty years after the date of His suffering. Thirty years hardly suffice to explain such a progress from the remote country of its birth to the centre of civilisation. Evidently long before that date, the period of indefinite elaboration must have been completed; it is not possible to admit that a fable in process of formation could have crossed the seas, founded a large Church in the capital of the world, and excited the wrath of Nero.

We arrive at the same result if we turn to Jewish testimony. No one in our day maintains any longer the entire authenticity of the chapter, which Josephus devotes to Christ in his "Antiquities." If this curious passage has been evidently retouched, its essential features, which we reproduce, remain: "In those times appeared Jesus, a wise man, the author of extraordinary acts,† having for disciples those who love truth;

* "Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat." (Tacitus, "Annals," 15,44.)

† Ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής. ("Antiq." XVIII. 3, 3.) M. Renan admits the authenticity of this passage. Taking it apart from any positively Christian features, as we have taken it, it accords perfectly with the Jewish historian's point of view. He takes a prudent position with regard to Christianity; he confirms the facts, while admitting that Jesus Christ was rejected by the *élite* of the nation. The passage in which he speaks of the death of James, the brother of the Lord, has not been questioned, and it refers evidently to that which we have quoted. ("Antiquities" XIX. 9, 1.)

He gathered around him many Jews and Greeks. They did not renounce the love they had pledged to him, even after Pilate had condemned him to the cross, at the demand of the chiefs of the nation. The body of the Christians, who have called themselves by his name, have remained faithful to him to this day." This testimony from a writer of the first century of our era, a stranger, and one as indifferent as possible to the Christian movement, has a great value. Josephus guarantees the historical character of the great events transpired at Jerusalem, though he may misconceive their inner and divine meaning. Even the Talmud confirms in its manner the Evangelical history by giving the names of three of the apostles, just those who on the most natural supposition may have had relations with the synagogue,* and by defaming the miraculous power of Jesus Christ, as his contemporaries did.† One seems to be hearing again those Pharisees who, unable to dispute his supernatural works, ascribed them to demoniacal influence. Jesus Christ worked miracles, and was mortally hated by the representatives of the Jewish hierarchy; this is the evidence of the Talmud. The testimony of the indifferent, and of enemies, is thus in favour of the historical verity of primitive Christianity. This twofold testimony teaches us that, on the threshold of the modern era, Judaism and Paganism were profoundly agitated by a man of Galilee, who wrought marvellous works, and miserably ended his strange life upon a cross. This condemned malefactor reigns nevertheless over his sect, which increases and has the formidable honour of uniting against itself in one common hatred the synagogues and the Pagan

* Matthew, Thaddeus, and James are mentioned in the Talmud of Babylon—("Treatise of the Sanhedrim," f. 43. 1.)

† When the Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Damas, was bitten by a serpent, Jacob the son of Zechanias came to him and spake these words: "I will speak to thee in the name of Jesus the son of Pandera." Then the Rabbi Israel exclaimed, "No, that is forbidden." "It were better to die," said another, "than to hear that name."—(Talmud of Jerusalem. "Treatise Avoda Sarah," f. 46, 4: Tholuck, "Glaubwürdigkeit der Evang. Geschichte," p. 72.)

powers. Our hostile or contemptuous witnesses do not speak only of the advent of a new idea. No, that which stirs a world is more than an idea, more than a doctrine, it is a person; His name has become a standard, a symbol—more still, a moral power. Who then is this Jesus, this Christ, who is at once so worshipped and maligned?

Let us now listen to the testimony of His friends. Pagan historians have shown us the existence, from the close of the first century, of a new and powerful religious body owning the name of Jesus. This religious body we know by the testimony of its authentic representatives; it has expressed its beliefs and its sentiments in unexceptionable documents. What do we gather from all these but the memory of the Christ of the Gospels, preserved not only in narratives full of holy love, but also in the very life of the Christians? Their souls feed on the great facts of evangelic story; more than this, they die to attest it, and the survivors inscribe its most pathetic symbols in the dark caves where they lay the remains of their martyrs; this history is the constant subject of their teaching and of their hymns. Above all, it is written in their deepest hearts. "I have no other holy annals," said an unknown Christian, "but Jesus Christ, His cross, His death, and resurrection."* Such words are the motto of the Church of the second century, which rises in a body to be the irrefragable witness of the events of the first. That an assurance so steadfast, so general, so heroic, could have been born of any mere legend, is a supposition which we cannot receive. We have still more direct testimony of the same period in the evidence of Quadratus, the earliest of Christian apologists, who wrote at the beginning of the second century, and whose book appeared to Jerome full of reason and faith. He affirms that in his time—no doubt in his

* Ἐμοὶ δ' ἀρχαῖά ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. (Ignat. "Ad Philadelph.," c. VIII.) This passage is to be found in the apocryphal part of the letters of Ignatius, but it has nevertheless the stamp of high antiquity.

childhood—some of the sick miraculously healed by Jesus Christ were still to be seen.*

If we go back to the first century, we are in the presence of the immediate disciples of Christ. It is vain to take exception to their testimony as distorted by ignorance or that ardent enthusiasm, which allows no place to candid investigation and reflection. Ignorance is not want of intelligence; the most prejudiced cannot but admit that those old boatmen, those fishers of the Lake of Tiberias, those tax-gatherers, displayed a mighty genius, since no word ever uttered has shaken the earth like their uncultured speech. It is further untrue that all the followers of Christ lived in ignorance; many of them shared in the cultivation of their times, and learned to know it in the most brilliant centres of civilisation. One of them, Saul of Tarsus, stands in the first rank of the intellectual *élite* of his country and shows himself versed in classic literature. His was a mind at once adorned with the flowers of noble poetry, and armed with the most vigorous dialectics.

We do not find any of the first Christians the subjects of a blind, impulsive faith. If they early attached themselves to Jesus Christ, they long resisted His plainest teachings; in the sorrowful words of their Master, they were "slow of heart to believe," for they shared the prejudices of their nation, and nothing was more opposed to their original views than the notion of a crucified and risen Messiah, whose kingdom was not of this world. Everything around and within them protested against such a doctrine. We know their consternation and dismay on the day of the Crucifixion; we know with what difficulty they were brought to admit, upon evidence, that the sepulchre had not retained the body of Jesus. The doubts of Thomas, the dulness of the disciples walking to Emmaus who would not accept the witness of the women;† the persistent and fierce incredulity of Saul of Tarsus, all show that no con-

* Routh., "Reliquiæ Sacræ," I., p. 75.
† Luke xxiv. 22.

dition of mind was further removed from unreflecting enthusiasm than that of the first apostles of the new religion. Who does not catch in their writings the inimitable accent of sincerity? Have they not preserved even the memory of their unfaithfulness? With Pascal, we are ready to believe martyr-witnesses. Impostors live by their falsehoods, but do not die for them. A man will die only for the cause for which he lives, never for that on which he trades. Our witnesses are then neither blind nor false; such is the conviction forced upon us by the very book which gives us their testimony. But granting them to be intelligent and sincere, may they not be suppositious? Were they not brought subsequently on to the scene to meet the necessities of the case? May we not have in the Gospel merely a well-invented fable or legend? The question turns, then, on the proof of authenticity. We have already a strong presumption in favour of the credibility of the sacred narrative, in the scornful or virulent testimony of pagan and Jewish writers. We have now to consider in themselves the claims upon which the Gospel history rests.

Before approaching this grave problem, let us dispose of that which is universally accepted. Among the letters of St. Paul there are some which have never raised a doubt, and before which the boldest criticism has been silent. By common consent this category includes the first epistle to the Thessalonians, and the letters to the Corinthians and to the Romans. These several writings of the apostle to the Gentiles bear a date anterior to his captivity, which took place about the year 62. They may, therefore, be assigned to some time between the years 50 and 60. Now they confirm at a glance all the principal facts of the life of Jesus, as these are recorded in our Gospels. His divine origin, His humiliation, His miracles, His death on the Cross, His resurrection, His reign in heaven; all these great events of Gospel history are the subject of exhortations, of burning appeals, of the mysterious raptures of the apostle. He does not enter into any continuous narrative, but

makes perpetual allusions to the history, as if nothing was more familiar to his readers; it is evident that he draws from the common source of primitive tradition. This tradition, then, was so well established twenty years after Christ, that it could be appealed to in a general manner, without explanation or discussion. The Church rests upon it as on a solid foundation. Thus we touch the rock below the shifting sands of legend. It is not possible to suppose that, in this short interval, a tradition so clear and positive could have been fortuitously born of a capricious mythology. It must not be forgotten that Paul lived in intimacy with the immediate disciples of Jesus, that he met at Jerusalem, Peter, James, and John ;* that he frequently returned to the metropolis of the primitive Church, and had opportunity on the very theatre of the Gospel history to interrogate its first witnesses. He lived in the midst of those five hundred Christians who saw the Risen Redeemer.† We are thus carried back to the very time of Christ, and those thirty years which are demanded for the growth of the Christian mythology are absolutely wanting.

The most critical of the negative schools are agreed in admitting the authenticity of the Revelation, and in placing the date of its composition before the siege of Jerusalem. This one book will suffice to furnish all the firm foundations of the Gospel history. Of little moment is the Jewish colouring, with which it is affirmed, not without exaggeration, that the whole book is tinged; the fact remains, nevertheless, that we find in every page the Christ delivered to death for the sins of the world, and raised again for its justification. The facts of the Gospel are throughout taken for granted in this inspired epopœia of the martyr. Thus, apart from our canonical writings, the principal events in the life of Jesus are guaranteed by the unanimous testimony of the primitive Church. The more complete narratives, the credibility of which we are about to examine, are not isolated; they are so linked with all the

* Gal. ii, 18, 19. † 1 Cor. xv. 6.

tradition of the first century that even if we were compelled to surrender them, Christian truth would stand in its entirety, on the sole basis of documents which have obtained universal assent.

These documents could not indeed replace our Gospels, as conveying a knowledge of the life of Jesus; for if they preserve its essential facts, they yet give only an imperfect idea of them, for the very reason that they pre-suppose the basis of tradition on which they were built. The Gospel, at the time of Paul's letters was, in some sort, in all mouths; it was not necessary, therefore, to refer in them to written tradition, which is for us the only means of reaching that full fountain of information, which flowed far and wide in the first century. Hence the supreme importance of the authenticity and credibility of our four Gospels, the only narratives which have stood and have deserved to stand, among all the various accounts of the life of Jesus which arose in the primitive Church.

II. The first century, the date of our four Gospels.*

We will pass rapidly over that which is generally admitted by criticism. No doubt is possible as to the universal acceptance of our four Gospels by the Church in the third century; this acceptance is of so much the greater value, as it preceded the epoch of summary decisions and was not imposed by decrees. The canon of Scripture had as yet no other basis than the free and unanimous adherence of Christians. The explicit testimony in favour of our Gospels given by the great

* This paragraph was written before the publication of M. Tischendorf's noble work, "Wann wurden unsere Evangelien verfasst." Leipzic. 1865. I am glad to find in it a full confirmation of the results at which I have arrived. I cannot, however, admit the formation of the canon of the New Testament in the closing year of the first century: this assertion seems to me to go beyond the truth of fact. I need not say how much the discoveries of M. Tischendorf, contained in his other works or in the prefaces to his valuable editions of the New Testament, have aided me in this chapter.

theologians of Alexandria has a high value, especially if the vast exegetical labours of Origen and his long travels in the Christian East are taken into account. Eusebius speaks in the name of all his immediate predecessors when he says, "In the first rank of writings accepted by all, we must place the sacred quaternion of the Gospels."* If we turn to the latter half of the second century, we find an assent no less unanimous and not less exact. Tertullian agrees on this point with Clement of Alexandria and Irenæus.† An attempt has been made to weaken the testimony of the Bishop of Lyons, because he adopts a strange symbolism to explain the number of our Gospels, which he likens to the four quarters of the world, the four pillars of a building, the four cherubim. But the use of a doubtful metaphor does not prove that Irenæus had not drawn from the purest and richest springs of information. At the same period, about the year 181, the canon of the Church of Rome, found by Muratori in the last century, mentions the Gospel of Luke and that of John, calling them the third and fourth Gospels, and thus implying the existence of the two others.‡ The Syriac translation, known under the name of *Peshito*,§ cannot be assigned to a later date: it contains our four Gospels; they must then have been long in circulation in the churches. It is certain that there were numerous Latin versions in Africa and in Italy in the course of the second

* *Τακτέον ἐν πρώτοις τὴν ἁγίαν τῶν εὐαγγελίων τετρακτύν.* (Eusebius, "H. E.," III., 25.)

† Tertullian, "Contr. Marc.," IV. 2, 5. Clement in Eusebius, "H. E.," VI. 14. Irenæus, "Advers. Hæres.," III. 1.

‡ Muratori's canon bears its date. In fact, the author tell us that the "Pastor Hermas" had been written very recently (*nuperrime conscriptus*) at Rome, under the episcopate of Pius. Now Pius was bishop in the year 156.

§ The *Peshito* belongs to a period when the canon was still far from determined; it does not contain the second epistle of Peter, nor the second and third epistles of John, nor that of Jude, nor the Revelation. This brings us to the date assigned. The idiom employed, and the rapid diffusion of this version in the churches of Syria, lead us to the same result.

century. Augustine says that they were multiplied "in the earliest days of the faith."* Now, Tertullian, the translator of Irenæus and Cyprian, always quotes the same text, which could only be possible if one of these versions had supplanted the rest. No one will dispute, that a certain lapse of time was necessary for the establishment of one standard translation. It follows then that our Gospels had been accepted in the churches of the West, at a date long anterior to that of Irenæus. We are thus carried back to the middle of the second century.

If we ascend yet higher, we may call in the testimony of Justin Martyr, whose conversion to Christianity may be placed about the year 132. Less bound to the letter of the text than the Fathers of later ages, and near enough to apostolic times to drink still at the stream of oral tradition, he cites our Gospels with some freedom. He calls them the "Memoirs of the Apostles," because it is his practice to translate Biblical terms, as far as possible, into the philosophical language of Greece. This appellation "Memoirs" would be much more lucid, than that of "Gospels," to the readers of Xenophon. But it is enough to give weight to these quotations of Justin, to recognise that they contain all the substance of the Gospel history, with verbal resemblances so striking that they infer the existence of our canonical text.† According to Justin himself, the reading of the "Memoirs of the Apostles" formed an integral part of the Christian worship of his time.‡ It is impossible to imagine other books than our Gospels having obtained, by the second century, this public honour and this consecration. How can it

* Primis fidei temporibus. (Augustine, "De Doctrinâ Christianâ," II. 1). The translation of the various books does not seem to have been the work of a single hand.

† Convincing proof of this will be gathered from the perusal of De Wette's "Introduction to the New Testament," which contains a complete collection of these quotations collated with the canonical texts § 66, and following.

‡ Justin, "Apol.," I., 67.

be questioned when we find Tatian, the immediate disciple of Justin, writing a commentary on the four Gospels, as if to obviate any equivocal construction of what his master intended by the terms, "Memoirs of the Apostles?" The apostolic Fathers, in too close proximity to the facts themselves to cling to the words, quote the texts with still less precision than Justin. They are primarily the men of oral tradition, as one of them has taken pains formally to tell us. "I did not think," said Papias, "to receive so much benefit from books as from living testimony."* This avowal fully explains, how it is that our canonical narratives occupy a much less place in the writings of the apostolic Fathers, than the events which are their subject. The fact nevertheless remains that the allusions in them to our Gospels are frequent and incontestable, and that the letters of these Fathers rest on the same historical foundation. Papias, of whose writings we only possess some fragments, makes direct mention of two of our Gospels in a passage to which we shall refer again. More than this, according to a recent discovery, the epistle of Barnabas gives the first Gospel the rank of a sacred book, a fact which implies not the determination of the canon as a whole, but the decided tendency in the first years of the second century, to set apart our Gospels as the holy depository of apostolic tradition. It is assuredly not a point of minor importance to read in a writing which belongs to the year 110 or 115, a quotation from the Gospel of Matthew with this prefix, "It is written."† The

* Eusebius, "H. E.," III. 39.

† Μήποτε, ὡς γέγραπται· "πολλοὶ κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί." These words contain a direct quotation from Matt. xix. 30. Until lately the formula, *It is written*, was only found in the Latin translation of the letters of Barnabas; it generally passed for a gloss. This supposition is no longer possible since the discovery of the "Codex Sinaiticus." Volckmar, indeed, attempts to detract from the importance of this quotation, connecting with it a passage in the fourth book of Esdras, already quoted by us, which runs, ***Multi creati, pauci autem salvati*** (4 Esdras viii. 3.) But this is nothing more than exegetical *tour de force*, called for by the necessities of the case. The analogy with the passage in Matthew is self-evident.

original text has been discovered in the Convent of Sinai, with the famous manuscript of the New Testament. Thus, from the dust of a monkish cell, arises a witness of the first ages, to give us a pledge of the historical value of our Gospels at the most critical moment of the dispute as to their origin.

Heresy itself comes forward to depose in their favour, during the course of the second century. It perverts, no doubt, the sacred text, and makes a Gospel in its own likeness, with which it mingles its reveries and wild speculations. But under its subtle webs perpetually appears the firm texture of our canonical narratives. Sometimes a whole allegorical system is based on a single point, a solitary detail, and the confirmation thus given to these accounts is all the more decisive for its indirectness.* The celebrated "Clementine Homilies," a sort of heretical romance belonging to the first half of the second century, quote numerous passages from our four Gospels with such precision, that it is impossible to doubt for an instant that the author had them before him.† It may perhaps be objected, that in the

* Numerous instances are to be found in Irenæus ("Contr. Hæres.," I. 8, 15, 18) of this allegorical interpretation of the Gospels, which implies the existence of the sacred narrative. The Gnostics drew indiscriminately from our four Gospels. The interview of Jesus with the doctors at twelve years of age, the apostasy of Judas, the healing of the demoniacs, the parable of the three measures of meal, the words of the Saviour in Gethsemane, His meetings with His disciples after His resurrection—all these and many other points were made use of in their fanciful typology. We shall see later to what an extent they confirm especially the authenticity of our fourth Gospel.

† It is certain that the "Clementines" are anterior to the "Recognitiones," which are a retouching of them. Now, this latter work cannot be placed later than the year 162, because it quotes the book "De Fato" of Bardesanes, which, according to Eusebius ("H. E.," IV. 30), was lost sight of by the middle of the second century. See for the quotations of our Gospels in the "Clementines," the Dressel edition:—First, for Matt., *Homily* XIX. 14, quoting Matt. xxvii. 52; *Homily* XIX. 2, quoting Matt. xii. 26. Second for Mark, *Homily* XIX. 2, quoting Mark ii. 13, &c., &c. Third, for Luke, *Homily* XIX. 14, quoting Luke viii. 24. &c. Fourth, for John, *Homily* XIX. 22, quoting John ix 2, 3. This last quotation forms part of the text recorded by Dressel.

course of this same century, several apocryphal or heretical Gospels were in circulation. But it must be remarked first, that these were promptly distinguished from the canonical Gospels, and that from the time of Irenæus they were unanimously set aside by the Church, although some of the fables which they contained may have mingled in the rather confused current of oral tradition.

A glance over them is sufficient to show that they bear the marks of legend, that they have everywhere substituted fantastic marvels for miracles, properly so called, and have mantled over with their luxuriant vegetation the gaps in the Gospel history, but without ever impairing the ground-work of the narrative.* On the contrary, they imply and verify it after their manner, for in a multitude of cases the legend is seen grafting itself on to the history, like a parasitic branch on a sturdy stem. The oldest of these apocryphal Gospels are the Protevangelium of James, already mentioned by Justin Martyn, and the Acts of Pilate, which bear the same date. They are at once seen to be legendary illustrations of our sacred books; thus they demonstrate in an irrefragable manner, the antecedence of the latter.† As to the Gospel of Marcion, it will be found to be nothing but an arbitrary recasting of our third Gospel, and thus it proves the credit which Luke had acquired at this early period.‡ It has been established beyond a doubt that the Gospel of the Hebrews, far from being the original of our Matthew, is a translation of the Greek

* The apocryphal Gospels abound with gross historical errors. In the "Protevang. Jacobi." the twelve tribes of Israel are spoken of as existing in the time of Herod, c. vi.

† See the "Evangelia apocrypha" published by Tischendorf, Liepzic, 1863. The prologomena give us the dates very exactly. The quotations made by Justin Martyn from these two Apocryphas are unquestioned.

‡ If the Gospel of Marcion had preceded that of Luke, there should be some trace of its use beyond the Marcionite sect, called by his name: but this sect alone appeals to it. Beside, the spirit of system is obvious in the eliminations the text of St. Luke undergoes from him. It is certain that Marcion treated in the same way Paul's Epistles (Irenæus, "Contr. Hæres," I. 29. Bleek, "Einleit in N.T.," p. 125).

Gospel* which we possess, and that it consequently guarantees its earlier date. Our four Gospels thus profit by the opposition made to them, and come forth to us as the universally accredited authority of the second century of the Church. Their canonical importance is increased in proportion to their distance from what might be called the age of the living word, when the written Gospel remained the sole medium between the Church and its Divine Founder.

The study and comparison of the ancient manuscripts of our sacred books proves, that by the middle of the second century the text of our Gospels had undergone a purifying process, and that it was then fixed for the Church, as the result of a critical labour more or less protracted. This appears from a comparison of the Sinaitic manuscript, with the readings adopted by ancient tradition and the most eminent of the Fathers. Now such a labour gives us a right to suppose, that the books which were the subject of it had been for many years recognised as authoritative.†

The most independent criticism lends its confirmation to these general conclusions, as to the credibility of the Gospels.

All those who have not gone into this question with an inflexible bias, have agreed to place the composition of our three first Gospels between the years 71—80, and to see in our canonical narratives the reflection of an anterior tradition.‡

* See this beautifully demonstrated in Bleek's "Introduction." The Gospel of the Hebrews contained legendary additions to our Greek Matthew. It had borrowed from Luke. It contained errors which implied the previous existence of the Greek text. Thus it gave to John Baptist cakes of honey for food instead of locusts (Epiph. "Hæres.," XXX. 13). A mistake evidently arising from the confusion of ἀκρίδες with ἐγκρίδες, which would be only possible on the supposition of a Greek original.

† Tischendorf, "Wann wurden unsere Evang. verfasst," p. 66, and following.

‡ Reuss, "Gesch. der Heilig. Schr. N. T." § 196. Réville, "Études Critiques sur l'Evangile de St. Matthieu," p. 245. Michel Nicolas, "Etudes Critiques sur la Bible." p. 6. Holzmann, "Die Synopt. Evang.," p. 412–416. Schenkel, "Characterbild Jesu," pp. 340–344. Renan, "Vie de Jésus," Introduction, p. 23.

The time thus allowed is very short, as it appears to us, for such a legendary alteration of facts as should have entirely transformed them. The importance of these concessions of criticism will be evident to all; by simplifying the question, they have given an entirely new aspect to it.

Yet one more reason for conceding to the synoptical Gospels, the date generally admitted in the first century, is the very peculiar character of the idiom in which they are written. Undoubtedly the Greek language could not have lent itself to a syntax, so singular and so overladen with Hebraisms, except at a period when Christianity was still enclosed in its cradle in Palestine. This was no longer the case after the commencement of the second century; the Greek or Roman element then quickly became predominant in the Church, and to estimate the extent of the change thus wrought, it is only needful to compare the letters of Polycarp and of Ignatius with our first Gospels. These bear, then, internal evidence of their origin.*

Every thing leads us to assign their composition to about the year 70. It is for the history of the first century to give us more positive statements with reference to their appearance in the Church.

III. Origin of the synoptics.

Our canonical narratives divide themselves, as is well known, into two groups. On one hand we have the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, known as the synoptics, because they all present the history of Jesus under the same aspect. On the other hand, we have a single Gospel, that of John, differing palpably from the other three. While the synoptics make Galilee the principal scene of Messiah's ministry, the narrative of John places the most important events of the life of the Saviour at Jerusalem or in Judæa. The teaching of

* Thiersch, "Versuch der Herstellung des historisch. Standpunkts für die Kritik des N. T.," c. III.

Christ in the synoptics is of an essentially popular character; it is figurative and parabolic, while in the fourth Gospel it has a metaphysical or mystical depth, which renders it more difficult to grasp. In fine, there exists between the synoptics and St. John a grave discrepancy, and one which has not yet received a satisfactory explanation, as to the date of the death of Jesus.

With the exception of this chronological difficulty, all the other divergencies are easily explained by the different intention and destination of the two narratives; this explanation will present itself to us in the history of their formation. Let us observe again, that whether as to facts or words, the two types of narrative, distinct as they may be in arrangement and form, rest upon the same historical basis. The synoptics, imply the journeys to Jerusalem. St. Luke speaks of the family of Bethany, as bound in close friendship with Jesus.* The lamentations over the unbelieving city to which He had so often preached repentance in vain, can only be explained by His having frequently resided there.† The resolution of the Sanhedrim which led to the tragical close of the history, points to a foregoing struggle. The fourth Gospel allows all the time necessary for the ministry in Galilee, and leaves it to be inferred on several occasions.‡ The question of doctrinal harmony we shall examine further on.

Our synoptics present a very marked uniformity of type. As they are collated, we are struck with the resemblance which

* Luke x. 38.

† Matt. xxiii. 37 ; Luke xiii. 34.

‡ See further on the chronological data in connection with John vi. 4. It is said in John vi. 2, that multitudes went with Jesus because of His miracles. Now these miracles are not related. In John vi. 66, it is said that many of His disciples went back from Him. The Evangelist had not told us of the formation of a band of disciples. In John vi. 70, mention is made of the twelve, but there has been no account of their calling. Between chapters vi. and vii. there is an interval of seven months. (Godet. "Examen des principales questions critiques au sujet du quatrième Evangile," p. 6).

exists, not only in the main features of the narrative, but also in detail and even in words. In parts they are almost absolutely identical. And yet they show numerous differences, not only in the arrangement of the story, but in the modes of speech employed. Often two of the synoptics agree together, while the third relates the same fact with very considerable variations.* How explain these resemblances and these differences? The theory of literal inspiration cuts the knot of the difficulty, for those at least who can accept an arbitrary system, which does violence to the best established facts, and in reality identifies the action of the divine Spirit with a mechanical or magical force. We are happily not reduced to this desperate resource. If it is needful to beware of theories which explain nothing, it is equally necessary to be on our guard against those which explain too much, and multiply artificial contrivances. The scientific spirit must know where to stop, and reserve is as essential to it as freedom of examination. Now the greater part of our critical systems on the origin of the synoptics err by excess of hypotheses. Their authors seem to be repeating, each in support of his own theory, the assurance of the fabulist, "I was there, and so it came to pass."

* There is an excellent summary of the harmonies and differences among the synoptics in the "Gesch. der Heilig. Schrift. N. T." by M. Reuss. § 79. The Gospel of the childhood is omitted by Mark, as well as the Sermon on the Mount, and several other great discourses of Jesus. The preaching of John the Baptist, and all that relates to his mission are related in nearly the same manner by the three evangelists. The journey of Christ to Jerusalem before His death is only recorded in detail in St. Luke. In the account of the passion and the resurrection, many divergencies appear on a common foundation. It has been calculated with reference to the text, that if it were divided into a hundred sections, there would be forty-nine common to the three first Gospels, nine common to Matthew and Mark, eight to Matthew and Luke, three to Mark and Luke. Mark has only two peculiar to himself, Matthew seven, and Luke twenty-three. Of the hundred sections of the text the proportion of Luke is eighty-two, Matthew seventy-three, and Mark sixty-three.

I will only briefly mention these various systems, which are most fallacious in their most exclusive tenets.

We have first the mythical school, of which Strauss is the strongest exponent; this is compelled, in self support, to place the composition of the Gospels at a late date, in order to give the length of time required for the elaboration of its complicated legends.* It is at once set aside, if it can be proved that our synoptics are traceable to an earlier period than the year 80. Now we have shown that this earlier date is, in our day, almost universally admitted. The concession of this point overturns, at the same time, the ingenious system of developments (*tendances*) inaugurated with so much *éclat* by Baur and his disciples. According to this learned historian, our Gospels were born of the conflicts of the Judæo-Christian and the Pauline party; they were preceded by an entire literature, since become apocryphal, which represented the violent doctrinal conflicts of the first century; our present Gospels bear traces of the concessions and compromises, which were to issue in the Catholic Church of the second century.† The most stupendous learning, and the most fertile ingenuity, will not make any one in our day admit, that the Gospel of the Hebrews preceded that of Matthew, and the Gospel of Marcion that of Luke. This monstrous attempt to transport the first century of the Church into the second, will remain the memento of one of the hardiest efforts of theological temerity; but the mountain of hypotheses crumbles away before the conclusive results, generally accepted by criticism, as to the date of our three first canonical narratives.

After the school of myth and that of developments, comes the theory of a primitive Gospel officially edited by the assembled apostles at Jerusalem, and upon which our synoptics

* See the new edition of Strauss' "Leben Jesu," vol. I.

† See the *résumé* of Baur's system in his work: "Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei erst. Jahrhund." p. 23 and following.

are supposed to have been modelled.* What is wanting to this explanation is the supposed apostolical college, sitting in private council in the holy city. Nothing could be more alien to the condition of the primitive Church. Further, there is enough to quash such an hypothesis in the prologue of Luke, which ignores it altogether. The theory most in favour in modern times is that which holds to a sort of combination of various primitive writings; these are supposed to be laid one upon another in our Gospels, like the beds in an alluvial soil. Our two first Gospels, for example, are recognised as the fundamental text—Matthew characterised by the predominance of discourses, Mark by that of narratives; these two, combined in various proportions and blended with oral tradition, give us our synoptics. We have thus the original Matthew and the original Mark, forming by their fusion our two first canonical narratives; the third Gospel, which is subsequent to these, is supposed to have profited by their successive amendments, and to have still further enriched them. This theory, ingeniously defended, rests upon the interpretation of an obscure passage in Papias, according to which our first Gospel was originally only a collection of discourses.† But this

* Eichhorn.

† See the admirable works of M. Reuss, summed up in his "Gesh. der heil. Schrift." N. T., §§ 187, 188; the deeply studied book of M. Réville, "Etudes Critiques sur l'Evangile de Matthieu" (Leyde, 1861); M. Holzmann's important work, "Die Synoptischen Evang." Leipzic, 1863. Bleek has presented a similar hypothesis in his "Introduction to the New Testament." He starts with the priority of Matthew. In his view the Primitive Gospel is a Greek Gospel, composed in Galilee from the first lesser written narratives. ("Einl. in N. T.," p. 236). M. Weizsæker, in his late work, "Untersuchungen ueber die Evangel. Gesch. ihre Quellen und den Gang. ihrer Entwickel.," Gotha, 1814, has displayed much erudition in the support of the theory of the two original sources of our synoptics, which he holds to be the primitive Mark and the *Logia*. He also seeks to trace in our Gospels the various layers of tradition; he supports this entirely by a comparison of the texts. His argument has more clearness and vigour than that of Holzmann, but it is none the less arbitrary, for the *à priori* plays a large

interpretation encounters grave objections from the most independent criticism.*

We shall presently bring forward this very passage of Papias, to determine the sources of our synoptical Gospels. Let us say at once, that it appears to us absolutely chimerical to pretend to distinguish, with any degree of certainty, the primitive elements of our Gospels from those subsequently added. The most eminent critics, if guided only by their individual appreciation of texts, and unbiassed by any tradition, come to the most various conclusions upon the same passages. One sees in Matthew evident marks of its being the later composition, while another makes the same observation on Mark. They are not less divided when the question is, whether such and such a narrative presents the tokens of originality or not. The conclusion then must be, that criticism has no certain test for distinctions so delicate; and we are convinced that such a test it never will possess, and that on this path of critical inquiry the arbitrary reigns unchecked.†

Antecedently to these recent hypotheses, a man profoundly

part in the determination of the approximate date of the canonical narratives.

* Michel Nicolas, "Etudes sur le Nouveau Testament," p. 120.

† M. Réville, with a view to distinguish the *Logia* from the primitive Mark in the Gospel of Matthew, points out that the framework of the discourses is often inconsistent with the discourses themselves, or at least does not belong to the presumed period of their delivery. He concludes, we have here two distinct traditions subsequently fused into one. Thus in the beatitudes, persecution is spoken of at the time when Christ was in greatest favour. The historical framework is then borrowed from a different evangelical narrative from that which contained the *Logia*. But such a view disallows the prophetic gift of Christ, and even the mere prevision of the future. This prevision granted, all discord is removed. Let us observe, likewise, that in the first Gospel we find the same method in the arrangement of the discourses as in that of the narratives; both are disposed rather by order of subjects than by order of time. It follows that the one and the other are from the same hand. M. Renan accepts M. Réville's theory without submitting it to any discussion. He has gracefully edited it, and that is all.

versed in Christian antiquities had assigned a very wide scope to oral tradition, in the determination of the form of the synoptical narrative. Gieseler's theory is certainly that which approaches most nearly to the true explanation, when shorn of its exclusive and exaggerated features.* It is in the wrong, doubtless, when it maintains that primitive tradition was fixed by authority, and was made the compulsory catechism of the missionaries of the apostolic age. It would be impossible, in this point of view, to explain the discrepancies apparent in the synoptical narratives of the death and resurrection of Jesus; for according to Gieseler's hypothesis, this portion of the Gospel history should have been, more than any other, cast into a positive form. Beside, this official determination of tradition cannot be conceived in a creative era like the pentecostal age. But the researches of the learned historian have thrown new light on the formation of primitive tradition, and they have the great merit of leading criticism back to its place in the very bosom of the apostolic Church—the living centre where the Gospels took their rise.

The refutation of the various systems, which we have rapidly passed under review, will be contained in the statement we are about to give as to the origin of our Gospels. Each one of these theories, the mythical excepted, carries its contingent of truth, when once its exclusive pretensions are laid aside; but we must nevertheless be prepared to give up the complete solution of a problem, for which some of the essential data must be always wanting.

Let us transport ourselves to Jerusalem on the day after the feast of Pentecost. Elated with the first effusion of the Holy Spirit,† living in ardent expectation of the near return of Christ, watching each day for his reappearance on a cloud to judge the world, the young Church seems to have pitched her tent

* Gieseler, "Ueber die Entstehung der Schrift. Evang.," 1823.

† "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." (Ephes. v. 8.)

on the mount of glorious visions; she is ready to take it up again at the first signal. In an attitude of a holy preparedness, like the virgins in the parable, with loins girded and lighted lamp, she awaits the signal of departure—that midnight chime which is to inaugurate an everlasting day. In such a frame of mind, nothing is less likely to occur to her, than the thought of writing a sacred book. A fervent, appealing call is uttered to souls; it is heard in the market-places and along highways and hedges; to all, the message is given that the master of the house has prepared his feast, that all things are now ready, and men must hasten to accept his invitation. Already they catch the joyful strains from the festal marriage-halls, for in this first enthusiasm, the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world is, as it were, parted. The Gospel was at first nothing but the proclamation of the good news of pardon, flying from mouth to mouth; the word never bore in those days the signification of a writing, a book; it stood always for the divine realities of salvation, the work of Christ, His death and His resurrection.*

All the expressions, employed in the New Testament to designate the proclamation of the new truth, set aside the notion of written documents.† The Church, for a long time, knew no other holy books than those of the Jews; the prophets sufficiently establish for her the rights of the new covenant. "The apostles of Christ," says Eusebius, "pure in life and adorned with all the virtues of the soul, but rude and uncultured

* The word Gospel is always found in the New Testament to refer to the object itself of faith, and to pardon from God obtained through Jesus Christ. This results evidently from its frequent use in the synoptics by Jesus Christ himself: "to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke vii. 22). It is in this sense that Paul speaks of his Gospel, at a time when there was not one line written of our canonical narratives (Gal. i. 8). These narratives themselves are thus designated the Gospel according to St. Matthew, according to St. Mark, according to St. Luke, according to St. John, which means the fact of salvation recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

† Λόγος (Jas. i. 23). λόγος ἀκοῆς (Heb. iv. 2). κήρυγμα (Tit. i. 3).

in speech, upheld solely by the power of Jesus Christ, by which they worked all their miracles, proclaimed the kingdom of God to the whole world. They were not concerned to write books, being charged with a far grander and superhuman mission."* It is then clear that the Gospel had been long spoken before it was written, and that the apostolic Church, especially in its first period, might be called the Church of the oral testimony.

This by no means implies, however, that this testimony was uncertain and fluctuating; it was, on the contrary, fixed at a very early stage in all its essential features. If the deposit of truth was entrusted to the whole Church, if it cannot be denied that the master was addressing all His disciples when He said, "Ye shall be my witnesses unto the ends of the earth,"† it is yet incontestable that the apostles occupied the foremost place among those witnesses. We require no other confirmation of this than the care taken by Christ to attach them to His person, and Himself to instruct them.

When it became needful to fill up the place of Judas, the essential condition demanded of the future apostle was, that he should have been with the eleven all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up, "so that he might be a witness of his resurrection."‡ Thus in the primitive Church the testimony which was to be the rule and check, was that of the apostles. It is this qualification of being an immediate and acknowledged witness of Christ, which is the distinctive mark of an apostle. It follows that the apostolic preaching was the nucleus of evangelical tradition. Thus we find that tradition taking a definite form from the very first. The discourses of St. Peter, given in the Acts of the Apostles, set forth the great facts of the life of Jesus with a manly simplicity, which engraves them readily on the memory. That which he delivered in the house of the centurion Cornelius, and of which we have only a summary, presents a sort of

* Eusebius, "H. E.," III. 24. † Acts i. 8. ‡ Acts i. 21, 22.

epitomised Gospel, which reminds us of the history by St. Mark. We have in the Acts only his apologetic discourses, those consequently in which he kept to the most general facts. The apostolic teaching and testimony expanded into far greater richness of detail in the inner circle of the Church. The most ordinary acts of the religious life had a special significance; if they simply broke bread among themselves, it sufficed to call up before their memory the touching scene in the upper chamber, with all that it imported. We see from the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, that before the composition of a single one of our Gospels, the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper was fixed in the remembrance of the Church. Clearly St. Paul and St. Luke drew from the same source.

The baptism of proselytes brought before the mind the essential facts of redemption, since from them it received its significance; historical developments necessarily became connected with its formula. Yet more, apostolic tradition acquired an ever-increasing fulness, for the promise of the Master was fulfilled to his disciples, and the Holy Spirit brought to their remembrance all things that Jesus had both done and taught. Many a divine saying of His lying dormant in their minds, waited only the sacred fire to quicken it into life again. There was nothing mechanical or artificial in this awakening of holy memories; the experiences of every day, the grave questions which arose, the striking application of one and another portion of the teaching of Jesus, the accomplishment of His predictions, all contributed to revive, in the minds of His disciples, many of the sublime utterances which had at first passed their comprehension.

We have a striking example of this purely moral impulse given to the memory by the Holy Spirit. When at Cæsarea, Peter saw the miraculous signs of the Pentecost renewed upon the members of a pagan household, he "remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with

water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."* The remarkable events which signalised this first age of the Church could not fail to multiply such recollections. And thus in the most natural manner tradition grew and was completed.

There is no difficulty in its assuming a more and more exact and definite form. Have we not known long poems and songs of varied rhythm, transmitted from generation to generation? Is not the Jewish nation pre-eminently the nation of traditions? The teaching of their synagogue was preserved orally for nearly two centuries, before being embodied in the Talmud. The rabbis kept for nearly seven hundred years a purely grammatical tradition. Assuredly the Gospel history would not be too heavy a weight on the memory of men to whom it was the one concern, and who fed upon it as their daily bread. Simple and unsophisticated minds, not burdened with a multitude of acquirements or of various speculations, hearts ardent and strong, living on the love of Christ—what safer guardians could there have been for evangelical tradition? A noble passage in a heretical book of the second century paints for us, in colours evidently genuine, the general solicitude in the primitive Church to preserve the faithful memory of Jesus. The "Clementines" put into the mouth of St. Peter the following words:—"I was accustomed to recal to mind the words of the Lord, which I had heard, so as to engrave them on my memory."† Thus did Irenæus a century later with the words of his master Polycarp. This primitive tradition, which preserved the historic Christ to the Church, by impressing His features on loving souls, finds a touching and faithful symbol in Mary, the mother of Jesus, who according to St. Luke kept in her heart the glorious things of which she had been the witness.‡

The memory of the Christians was soon aided by written narratives. The prologue to the Gospel of Luke is explicit on this point. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set

* Acts xi. 16. † "Recognitiones," Lib. III. 1. ‡ Luke ii. 19.

forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke i. 1, 2).* The evangelist distinguishes between direct tradition, which is the preaching of the apostles, and the consolidation of this tradition in the numerous writings intended faithfully to preserve it. These writings are not yet Gospels, properly so called: they are fragmentary relations, but have the merit of preserving, in its life and freshness, the testimony of the apostolic witnesses. The ardent interest taken by the primitive Christians in all that concerned the life of the Saviour, led them to use every means not to lose any portion of it; in preserving it in writing they only conformed to the customs of their countrymen.

Evidently such narrations contributed to give a more positive character to primitive tradition; they formed that common source from which St. Paul drew largely, and which was free from the uncertainty of a floating oral tradition. We find, in truth, in the letters of the apostle to the Gentiles, apart from the great features of the Gospel history, allusions to the words of Jesus, which are almost verbal quotations, and which show that the teaching of the Master was retained in a very exact form. Without dwelling on the institution of the Lord's Supper mentioned above, we find St. Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, adducing a saying of Christ's, which is found word for word in the third Gospel. "The labourer," he says, "is worthy of his hire."† Several other texts present coincidences no less striking. The apostle, in his first letter to the Corinthians, pronounces that the Christian may eat whatsoever is set before him. This is a lesson of the Master's preserved by St. Luke.‡

* *Αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται τοῦ λόγου.*

† 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. Compare Luke x. 7. See also 1 Cor. ix. 14, compared with Luke x. 7, 8. *Οὕτω καὶ ὁ κύριος διέταξε τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν, ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν.*

‡ *Πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ἐσθίετε* (1 Cor. x. 27). Compare with Luke x. 8, *Ἐσθίετε τὰ παρατιθέμενα ὑμῖν.*

In the seventh chapter of the same letter, the apostle refers, on the question of marriage, to the very words of Jesus which we find in our Gospels.*

It follows from these significant passages that before the composition of our canonical narratives, apostolic tradition was in part fixed, especially as regards the words of the Master. The lesser writings referred to by St. Luke had no doubt an important share in this result. For our part, we see no difficulty in admitting that at this period a nucleus of common traditions was formed; this remained as a solid basis underlying the diversity of relations, which circulated from Church to Church.

It is enough to compare the recitals of the same facts in the Acts of the Apostles to perceive, that there was a marked disposition among the first Christians to use the same form of language, to cast the narrative into a sort of mould, which allowed only some divergencies of detail.† We find the same tendency in the Church of the second century. A comparison of the different versions of the so-called apostolical constitutions (which initiate us into the ecclesiastical organisation of those times), shows this compound tradition forming itself in some sort into a compact and consistent whole—a common and permanent residuum underlying all divergencies.‡

Thus, in our view, tradition was the forerunner of canonical Scripture; from it the latter issued, as from its fountain, while that fountain was still flowing, pure and abundant, over the very ground which Christ had trodden, and on which there were enacted the great scenes of redemption. We have no difficulty in receiving as authentic, certain words of the Saviour,

* When Paul says that the Lord says, "Let not the wife depart from her husband" (1 Cor. vii. 10); he carries us back to Mark x. 7-9. *What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* On the question of divorce he refers to Luke xvi. 18.

† Compare the account of Peter's vision. Acts x. 9-16, with the account of the same fact Acts xi. 4-10. Compare also Acts ix. 1-17, and Acts xxvi. 9-20.

‡ The various versions of the apostolical constitutions are to be found in Volume II. of Bunsen's "Analecta Antenicæna."

or the relation of certain facts not given in our Gospels, on the sole condition that they come to us with sure marks of authenticity.*

The Gospel, then, was preached and accepted in the noblest churches in the world, before it had received its definitive sanction. This in no way lessens the value of our canonical narratives; we believe firmly that without them, primitive tradition would have become speedily corrupted after the death of the last of the apostles. The Church of direct witnesses could alone dispense with written Gospels, because it possessed their equivalent in the testimony of the apostles and their disciples. Persuaded, as we are, that God watches over His Church, and that His Providence, which stoops to the smallest concerns of human life, provided that the immortal memory of the Redeemer should be preserved in its purity, we believe assuredly in His intervention in the formation of the Gospels we possess, which are the definitive Gospels. We have here more than an *à priori* argument; we are confronted with a positive fact; we possess recitals, connected and complete, which have substituted and obliterated the multiplied relations which preceded them, as the building displaces the scaffolding which served for its erection. Supposing them to have been produced in the primitive Church in an entirely natural manner, without anything resembling an official proclamation, such as was given at the time of the Mosaic revelation, they have, nevertheless, proved their ascendancy with so much power that the Christian conscience recognises the seal of the divine hand upon them, and owns in its mightiest influence that afflatus of inspiration, which was the atmosphere of the apostolic Church. If we inquire into the origin of their unique and sovereign character, we find it precisely in that which distinguishes them from those minor scriptures of which St. Luke speaks. Those were mere frag-

* It is thus with some of the words of Christ collected by the Fathers; the account of the woman taken in adultery, which is wanting in the oldest manuscripts, is guaranteed by the testimony of Papias.

mentary narratives; the sheaf of primitive tradition has now found its living band, which will save it from falling again to earth and scattering its precious grain. Every one of these writings has an individual impress, and corresponds to some one of the phases and aspects of the apostolic age; only as they are thus estimated, do they give us any adequate idea of that incomparable unity which harmonises in itself so many contrasts. What we have here then, is something very different from that book of the poor man, who, "having but the one, adds to it all that comes to his hand."* No; the noblest production in the world was not composed like the wildest legends. History, impartially questioned, gives us far other answers.

Our canonical Gospels are not assignable to an earlier date than the year 60. Up to this period the Church at Jerusalem remained the centre and metropolis of the Christians. Evangelical tradition was there preserved in a perfectly natural manner by the concourse of apostolic men. When this group begins to be broken up, the Church can no longer be contented with fragmentary relations, which only imperfectly preserve the great teaching of primitive times. There is no official proceeding; it is the natural course of things, the consequence of a change of circumstances. The most false idea is formed of Christian antiquity when it is imagined, that our canonical Gospels were composed and then brought out with *éclat* as theopneustic scriptures. There was no ark of cedar in the primitive Church, in which to enshrine the holy book, as in the old covenant. Each canonical Gospel arose spontaneously, as occasion called for it, as the result of circumstances in which we see, indeed, the hand of Providence guarding the treasure of the universal Church, but in which there is no semblance of a divine proclamation; the charge of discerning and asserting the incomparable value of these truly apostolic documents, was left to the Christian conscience.

The oldest direct testimony in favour of the first canonical

* M. Renan, Introduction to the "Vie de Jésus," p. 22.

narrative is found in the following passage from the epistle of Barnabas: "When Jesus Christ chose his apostles, who were to proclaim his Gospel, he chose the most notorious characters, to show that he was not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* These closing words are found verbatim in our Matthew; they are the reply of Jesus to the reproaches of the Pharisees, when they murmur at His going to be a guest at the house of the tax-gatherer.† According to Eusebius, the first Gospel is only a summary of the preaching of the apostle, given when he was on the point of starting for his distant missions.‡ There is no valid reason for rejecting this assertion, which is confirmed by St. Jerome, Origen, and Irenæus.§ Matthew is that toll-taker of Capernaum named Levi, who received his decisive call as he was sitting at the receipt of custom,‖ and took his place among the twelve.¶ His original calling implied an amount of education, which rendered him capable of relating the facts of which he was the witness. He belonged to that despised class, which the party of the Pharisees loaded with such contempt, that to be in the company of a publican was of itself a scandal.** An upright and pious soul, attached to the religion of his fathers, the tax-gatherer Levi had, doubtless, suffered cruelly from this species of moral proscription; he was thus prepared to appreciate keenly the contrast between the implacable Judaism of the Pharisees, and

* Ὅτε δὲ τοὺς ἰδίους ἀποστόλους τοὺς μέλλοντας κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον αὐτοῦ ἐξελίξατο ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνομωτέρους ("Ep. Barn." i. 5.)

† Matt. ix. 13.

‡ Ματθαῖος πρότερον Ἑβραίοις κηρύξας, ὡς ἔμελλε καὶ ἐπ' ἑτέρους ἰέναι, πατρίῳ γλώττῃ γραφῇ παραδοὺς τὸ κατ'αὐτὸν εὐαγγέλιον (Euseb. iii. 24.)

§ St. Jerome, "Comment. in Matth. Præfat." Origen in Eusebius, VI. 25. Irenæus, "Hæres." III. 1

‖ Luke v. 27; Mark ii. 14.

¶ Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15. The first Gospel (x. 3) calls Matthew ὁ τελώνης, and mentions (ix. 9, 10) his calling of tax-gatherer, and the feast which he gave to Jesus at his house. In Luke v. 27–29 and Mark ii. 13–15 the feast given by the publican Levi is in the same historical connection. Evidently the reference is to the same person.

** See Luke xv. 1.

the religion of charity which was the fulfilment of true Judaism. The look of holy love turned upon this noble, wounded heart bound it for ever to the person of Jesus. Matthew, according to the statement of Eusebius, appears to have remained at Jerusalem later than the other apostles.* It was, therefore, natural that he should be appealed to, to give an account of their common preaching in the capital of the theocracy. We have only vague information upon his mission in Arabia, and the close of his life.

Let us turn to his Gospel, and to the rare light thrown by Christian antiquity on its composition. We must pause before the celebrated passage of Papias, the subject of so much controversy. Papias declares that he learned from John the Presbyter, the contemporary of the apostles, that Matthew had made a collection in Hebrew of the evangelical oracles, and that every one interpreted them according to his ability.† These *evangelical oracles* have been erroneously supposed to consist only of a collection of the discourses of the Saviour. The expression *oracles* has, however, a far wider sense, and is applied in the Epistle to the Hebrews to the whole of the Old Testament revelations.‡ It is, beside, wholly impossible to separate the greater part of the words of Christ from the circumstances or acts, which were the occasion of them. Papias had himself written a book on the *oracles of the Lord*, which included narratives, properly so called, as may be seen from the fragments which remain.§ It is further certain that Eusebius, and his contemporaries who possessed his work, applied his description to a narrative more or less complete, and not to a simple collection of discourses.

* Eusebius, "H. E.," V., 10.

† *Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ τὰ λογία συνεγράψατο, ἡρμήνευσι δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἠδύνατο ἕκαστος* (Eusebius, "H. E.," III. 39).

‡ Hebrews v. 12.

§ The *κυριακὰ λόγια* included, for example, the account of the woman taken in adultery (Eusebius III. 39). Papias, after saying that Mark did not give the oracles of the Saviour in consecutive order, defines thus this word *λόγια· λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα* (Eusebius III. 39).

We believe, then, that Papias had, doubtless, heard of a Hebrew original of our Matthew; and as there is no trace of any such existing at the beginning of the second century, we may suppose that it had been already supplanted by our Greek Gospel, which was destined by its very language for a much wider circulation. Clearly this original Hebrew would have an especial interest for the Christians of Judæa, who might have made it the subject of numerous modifications.* The sort of contempt shown by Papias for written tradition, might well explain his inexact information with reference to it; he avows that he seeks, above all, oral tradition, and concerns himself with this alone. In consequence of this bias of mind it is, that he attaches so little importance to the first Greek Gospel, and places it in the category of those numerous translations of the original Hebrew, which were current in the churches. The expression which he uses implies that these translations were regarded as very inexact. "Everyone," he says, "translated as he could." A superficial observer like Papias, exclusively preoccupied with oral tradition, characterised by these words the very great freedom which was used with the original, in the Greek version of Matthew. This freedom goes so far, that we are warranted in regarding the Gospel which we possess as a second original.

In truth, the style is that of a first hand; it flows direct from the fountain; it has even subtleties of meaning, and sometimes almost a play on words, which is irreconcileable with the idea of a translation.† Every time the evangelist quotes in his own name from the Old Testament, he recurs to the original Hebrew, while he borrows from the Septuagint the citations interpolated in the discourses which he reproduces. Evidently this is not the style of a mere translator. Christian antiquity was then acquainted with a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, for

* Perhaps it was not in existence in the time of Papias, except in the imperfect and overladen form of the Gospel of the Hebrews.

† *Ἀφανίζουσι ὅπως φανῶσι* (Matt. vi. 16.) *Κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει* (Matt. xxi. 14.)

which was substituted in the second century our Greek Gospel, which is rather a recasting than a translation. It has been maintained that this Greek Gospel was equally from the hand of the apostle. We do not think so. In the first place, no positive passage can be adduced in support of this assertion, nor can we, on other grounds, suppose the first of our canonical narratives to have been written entirely by the hand of an apostle. Would an ocular witness have introduced such clear and precise chronological data, in a chain of facts and discourses, in which there was evidently only a grouping of events or of sayings, arranged under certain general heads? The divergencies from the Gospel of John, though relating only to secondary points, do not permit us to admit in our Matthew another direct witness. An apostle who had not left Jesus Christ, throughout His whole ministry, would not have passed over in silence His journeys to Jerusalem; he would not have limited to Galilee the appearances of the Risen one, nor would he have assigned a wrong date to the celebration of the last Passover.*

These minor inaccuracies are of no moment if only they are not ascribed to an apostle; they have so much the less weight because our Greek Gospel does not profess to be by Matthew. From the conscientious examination of the question, we gather that the apostle did indeed write a very complete account of his preaching, as stated by Eusebius, but that this account was not formed into a Gospel, properly so called, connected in all its parts. The unknown author of our Greek Gospel took it as the principal basis of his narrative, incorporating it in his own and supplementing it.

The apostle dwelt especially on that part of the teaching of Christ, which set in relief the true kingdom of God, in oppo-

* How could it be that an ocular witness, in giving the account of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, should speak of two asses, instead of one, like the other evangelists? (Matt. xxi. 2.) Evidently he is guided here by the parallelism of Zechariah ix. 9.

sition to the materialistic theocracy of his age. He collected the discourses and events most apt for his purpose, passing by the more exalted, less popular teaching of which Jerusalem was the scene, and which was to be afterwards recorded by John for the Church. His summary of preaching was a sublime outline of the Gospel; it cannot be attacked on the ground of omissions, since it was not the intention of the apostle to write a complete and definite Gospel. The author of our canonical narrative wrote the Gospel which we possess, under the most marked Divine inspiration, embodying in it the writings of Matthew, the substance of which was the preaching of the twelve, only casting it into a more comprehensive form. The errors of detail into which he has fallen, inexplicable as they would be in the apostle, are perfectly conceivable on the part of his disciple. What he wrote is still in truth the Gospel *according* to Matthew; it represents one entire period of the primitive Church, and was written at a date which secures to it its high historical value. This date is inscribed in the book itself. The manner in which the author gives the prediction of the near advent of the Saviour, and the closing crisis of history, connecting them immediately with the destruction of Jerusalem, without explanation or comment, clearly places the date of his Gospel before that tragical event, that is, before the year 70.* This result has been gained by criticism, and its importance cannot be mistaken.

Thus, at this remote period, we have a Greek Gospel, which is only the definitive edition of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew,

* Εὐθέως δὲ (Matt. xxiv. 29.) We have a striking proof of the impossibility of placing the first Gospel long after the taking of Jerusalem. This is the narrative of Hegesippus of an interview which must have taken place between the Emperor Domitian and some Christians from Palestine, relations of Jesus. The Emperor questioning them upon the reign of Christ, they replied, that His heavenly kingdom would be established at the consummation of the age; ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος (Euseb., "H. E.," II. 320.) The εὐθέως of the first Gospel is no longer possible after the destruction of Jerusalem.

and which preserves to us, in a methodical narrative, the history of Jesus, presented from the point of view of the first apostolic preaching at Jerusalem. We have here, in a manner, the glorious testament of the Church of the upper room, bequeathing to future ages the momentous truth, that Jesus Christ is indeed the Messiah expected, and heralded by the old covenant; that He responds to all the pious aspirations of the past, but not to the carnal expectations of a degenerate theocracy; that he is, in fine, the King of the new people of God, consecrated, not on Mount Zion, but with His own blood on the hill of Golgotha. This is the fundamental idea of our first Gospel. It may be called the Gospel of the Fulfilment, so much does it dwell on the correspondence of evangelical facts with the predictions of the Old Testament. From its commencement it points out Jesus as the great son of David, but shows Him watched from the first by that murderous hate, which was to end by nailing Him to the cross. The sermon on the mount, the parables of the kingdom, the anathemas on the Pharisees, the mournful story of His passion, all tend to develop, in opposition to the false notions of a materialised Judaism, the conception of the true Christ, the royal legislator and victim. Jesus is indeed the Messiah of the prophets and holy men of old, attested as such by the perfect harmony of the circumstances of his life and death with the oracles of ancient prophecy, which are quoted with such minute exactness by our evangelist.

Nothing in Matthew bespeaks a narrow Judæo-Christianity. He does not write as a partisan; ever ready to recognise the worth of the old covenant, he yet maintains the breadth of the new. If his Gospel ascribes a permanent value to the law, it is in a very limited sense, since he acknowledges that in several of its ordinances it has pandered to the hardness of the heart of man:* he rises perpetually from the letter to the spirit, from the outward act to the moral motive.† If the twelve are en-

* Matt. xix. 8. † ch. xv. 16–20.

joined not to go to the heathen in their first mission, it is a provisional injunction; for the last word of Christ is a command to His disciples to baptize all nations.* The field of the divine harvest is not merely the land of Judæa but the world.† The child Jesus is worshipped by the Magi as well as by the shepherds of Bethlehem.‡ The condemnation of unbelieving Judaism is solemnly pronounced.§ John the Baptist proclaims the nothingness of descent from Abraham.‖ Messiah is not only the son of David; He is, above all, the Son of God.¶ If the story of the Canaanitish woman is brought forward in objection, we point to its conclusion, which shows the legal barrier levelled before the faith of the pious mother. The prophetic passages are no more Judaistic in their colouring than those of St. Paul. Finally, Jesus proclaims boldly that He is greater than the Sabbath and the temple.** The Gospel according to St. Matthew is not, then, a party Gospel; it reveals, on the contrary, the deep agreement which existed between the Church in Palestine, and that which was formed in the Gentile world. Thus is closed and summed up the first period of the apostolic age; the type of the preaching of the twelve is preserved for ever to the Church in our first Gospel.

If the good news of salvation must needs sound forth first in the midst of the Jewish nation, the relations, so numerous at this period, of the Jews with other peoples, quickly enlarged the sphere of Christian missions. This enlargement was effected in *fact*, before it received its apology in words. Several years before St. Paul lifted up his powerful voice in the Church, to level all national barriers before the Redeemer of mankind, St. Peter opened the doors to a Gentile convert, who had not yet passed the gate of the temple; the centurion Cornelius, with all his household, was baptized by him at Cæsarea. To men of this class the Gospel would need to be presented with great simplicity as a divine history; allusions to

* Matt. xxviii. 19 † ch. xiii. 38. ‡ ch. ii. 2. § ch. viii. 10–12.
‖ ch. iii. 9. ¶ ch. xxii. 43. ** ch. xii. 6.

the Old Testament would have no force with such an auditory. The only thing to be done was to proclaim the great facts of redemption; nothing would better commend itself to the Roman soldier than a living, graphic narration, without exegetical expansion or marked tendency. This is precisely what we find in the address of Peter, delivered to the centurion's family, and in our second Gospel, which reads like an expansion of that address.

One of the oldest traditions, preserved by Papias, says that Mark was the interpreter of Peter, when the latter preached the Gospel at Rome. "Mark," says this Father, "wrote down with care, but without order, that which had been said and done by Jesus Christ. In truth, he had himself neither heard nor followed the Lord; he had subsequently joined himself to Peter; this Apostle gave his teaching according to the needs of his hearers, and not as if he intended to present a consecutive history of the oracles of the Lord. Mark wrote down accurately the things which he remembered, aiming only to omit nothing and to falsify nothing which he had heard."* This passage is no less contested than the famous text of Papias on Matthew; does it really apply to our second Gospel, or must we suppose it to refer to some primitive writing which we have lost?

We think that a comparison of the second Gospel with the others, and especially with the fourth, renders this judgment of high Christian antiquity perfectly natural; to any one familiar with the beautiful arrangement of the Gospel of Matthew and that of Luke, both introduced with an account of the infancy of Christ, the second Gospel, which opens with a sort of abruptness, must appear a mere fragment of the evangelical history. It stands like a temple without a portico—defective therefore

* Μάρκος μὲν ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου γενόμενος ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν οὐ μέντοι τάξει (Euseb. "H. E.," III. 29). This testimony is confirmed by Tertullian, "Adv. Marc.," IV. 5. Hieronym., "De Viris Illust.," 8.

in its construction.* The grand discourses of the Master were passed over in silence. It may be further possible, according to the testimony of the Fathers, that Mark may have written at Rome only the first outline of his Gospel—the simple reproduction of the preaching of Peter—and that, at a later period, after the death of the apostle, he may have completed it, without taking from it any of its original character of force and vivacity. In fact, while Clement of Alexandria fixes the composition of the second Gospel at the very period of Peter's sojourn at Rome (about the year 64), Irenæus attributes it to a later date.† However this may be, it is to us certain that, in its essential parts, the Gospel of Mark was written during the lifetime of the apostle Peter, whose forcible preaching it reproduces in so faithful a manner. The history of the age of the apostles confirms fully what Papias tells us about Mark. He was of Jewish origin; the house of his mother was a place of meeting for the Christians at Jerusalem. There they were assembled for prayer at the time of Peter's deliverance.‡ This fact indicates how much the apostle was beloved by Mark's family. There seems to have been a great moral resemblance between Mark and Peter. The young disciple shows the same ardent and susceptible nature, before he has passed through the refining crucible. Perhaps we may recognise in him the unknown young man, who followed Jesus afar off at the moment of his arrest; and who, in his precipitate flight, left in the hands of the first who came up with him, the garment which he had hastily thrown around him.§ His courageous eagerness to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, and his readiness to turn away from a dangerous duty‖—both are traits which recal the son of Jonas.

* M. Reuss himself admits the possibility of applying the quotation of Papias to our actual Mark ("Gesch. Heil. Sch. N. T.," §187). See Bleek, "Einleit." p. 116.

† Irenæus in Eusebius, V. 8.

‡ Acts xii. 2.

§ Mark xiv. 51, 52.

‖ Acts xii., and xv. 38.

Mark returned to Jerusalem. We find him subsequently matured, established in faith and courage; the apostle Peter tenderly calls him his son, in his epistle written from Babylon.* Before rejoining the latter in this city, Mark anew attached himself to Paul, never more to quit him even in the hour of peril and captivity. He was with him in his prison at Cæsarea.† From thence probably it was that he went to Peter, to return to Rome, whither St. Paul recalled him, with an urgency which does Mark honour. Peter himself soon arrived in the great metropolis. Who could have been better prepared than Mark to act as his interpreter, not only to the Romans, but also to all generations of Christians?

If we consider his Gospel itself, we are struck at once with certain indications that it was written for the Romans. The author employs, for example, many Latin words.‡ He is careful to tell his readers that Simon of Cyrene was the father-in-law of Alexander and Rufus, who were of Rome—a point which would be interesting only to the inhabitants of that city.§ The ruling characteristics of the Christianity of Palestine find no place in Mark's narrative. He makes scarcely an allusion to the Jewish oracles, and he gives explanations of Hebrew customs, which would have been perfectly needless except to the Gentile world. That which is pre-eminently noticeable is the vivid, energetic character of his narrative and the warmth of his colouring. This mode of relation was admirably adapted to the practical genius of the Romans, who concerned themselves far less with the idea and the explanation of facts, than with the facts themselves. No narrative is so dramatic as that of Mark. The long discourses given in the two other synoptics are suppressed. The narration is concise and graphic. By unmistakeable tokens we know that we have in this Gospel the

* 1 Peter v. 13.
† Philemon, 24.
‡ *Δηνάριον*, *κεντυρίων* (Mark xv. 39).
§ Mark xv. 21, compared with Rom. xvi. 13.

echo of a direct witness. He calls by his name of Bartimæus, the blind man healed at the gates of Jericho; he tells us that Jesus, during the storm on the lake of Tiberias, was "in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow." He mentions also the look of love with which Jesus received the rich young man, and the deep sigh which broke from Him as He verified the unbelief of the Jews.* The scene of the passion, and especially the account of Peter's denial, bears the dramatic stamp in full relief and clearness.

The general tone of the narrative is opposed absolutely to the view, that Mark was only an abbreviator of Matthew and Luke. Such scribal processes were quite foreign to the apostolic age. Mark, in his long sojourns in Jerusalem, doubtless heard the preaching of Matthew, which became subsequently the foundation of the first Gospel; there is nothing to prevent our admitting that he may have preserved numerous passages of it in writing. This was a custom already in vogue in the primitive Church, as we have seen in the prologue to Luke's Gospel. In conforming to it, Mark would have acted perfectly naturally. The analogies and discrepancies of the two Gospels would be thus explained. The omission of the portions especially designed for an audience of Jewish Christians, in the preaching of Matthew, and yet more the peculiar turn of the preaching of Peter at Rome, give a unique character to Mark's narrative. That which it presents to us is, in truth, not Messiah fulfilling the ancient covenant, but the Son of God displaying supernatural power for the salvation of the world. If the Gospel of Matthew is the Gospel of fulfilment, Mark's is the Gospel of divine power manifested in Jesus Christ.†

* Mark x. 46; iv. 38; x. 21; viii. 12.

† Strauss (new "Life of Jesus," p. 133) sees in the Gospel of Mark a writing inspired by the tendency to conciliation, which had, according to him, its principal seat at Rome in the middle of the second century. Taking his stand on certain verbal analogies between the second and fourth Gospels, he assigns a later date to Mark, as if these analogies might not as well establish the ante-

It was not enough that the preaching of the Gospel should win the Gentile world by the simple operation of the first missions; it was needful that the national barriers, lowered under the action of an irresistible expansive impulse, should be formally levelled to the ground, and the recognition fully made that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek." It was not only the new religious society which was to grow and extend itself; its doctrine was to expand or rather to free itself from all Jewish prejudices. Many a conflict had to be passed through before the great truth was fully brought to the light, that Christianity is not the religion of a people, but of mankind. The efforts, the sufferings, the fruitful labours of St. Paul alone assured his victory. We have seen that our two first Gospels, far from reflecting the passions of a narrow, Judaised Christianity, set forth with equal simplicity and breadth, the universality of the Gospel in opposition to the specialities of Judaism. But it was needful that this character of universality should appear, with yet more plainness, in one of the deposits of primitive tradition. This was accomplished in the third Gospel, rightly called the Pauline Gospel. It is no more in contradiction with the first two narratives, than was Paul himself with the twelve. It is as temperate in its universality as Matthew in his Judæo-Christianity. Luke maintains the perpetuity of the law;* the prophetic portion of his writings preserves the Hebraic colouring;† the Jew's right of primogeniture in the kingdom of God is explicitly recognised in the parable of the Prodigal Son.‡ Clearly there is here neither an exaggeration of Pauline doctrine, nor any desire to tone down contrasts. Numerous and characteristic traits bring out the broad ground taken by the third Gospel. We note the following: the genealogy of Christ, carried back to Adam, to

cedence of Mark as the contrary. As to the theory of conciliation, it falls, with the whole system of Tübingen, before the impossibility of placing the date of our Gospels in the second century.

* Luke xx. 17. † ch. xxii. 30. ‡ ch. xv. 25–31.

point Him out as the Son of Man—the mission of the seventy disciples, which number represented in Jewish symbolism the nations not included in the theocracy—the generous part accorded to the Samaritans who were the first excluded from the divine covenant—the determination of the conditions of salvation ascribed to the free pardoning grace of God—lastly, that beautiful tone of merciful humanity and tender pity, which is found so repeatedly in the parables and discourses of Jesus, as rendered by this evangelist.*

A tradition not disputed in Christian antiquity, though of later date than that which refers to the first two Gospels, ascribes the third to Luke,† one of the companions of St Paul, who had followed him to Rome, and whom the apostle mentions in his letter to the Colossians‡ as one of his near friends. As Paul, in his salutations, places his name after the Jews by birth, and between Epaphras and Demas, who were Greek proselytes, it is fair to suppose that Luke was of the same nation. Tradition assigns Antioch as his birth-place; he was a physician, and consequently a person of cultivation. It is evident from his prologue to the Acts, that he wrote Greek very correctly. Clearly no man was better prepared to become the careful deponent of Gospel tradition, while dwelling by preference on the portions upon which St. Paul had founded his special teaching. The third Gospel is addressed to a man of distinction, according to a common custom of the ancients. It arose, then, like the other canonical narratives, out of particular circumstances, and has, like them, that seal of simplicity and truth, which is wanting to books issued with official forms and pretensions. As Matthew's Gospel retains the type of the preaching of the twelve, the Gospel of Luke is the monument

* Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son (chap. xv.), of the Good Samaritan (x. 25-37), the account of the resurrection of the son of the Widow of Nain (vii. 12, 15).

† Irenæus, "Hæres." III. 14. Tertul., "Adv. Marc.," 145. Origen in Eusebius, "H. E.," VI. 25.

‡ Col. iv. 14.

of that broader preaching of the thirteenth apostle, who had been preceded on this track by Stephen the deacon.

It is grossly unjust to speak of Luke as a simple compiler; he is no more so than Mark is an abbreviator. A spirit of lofty poetry and of simple veracity breathes in this transparent narrative, which is more attractive than the other two. There seems no doubt that Luke was acquainted with Mark, whose scripture, especially in its first form, would answer to those narratives without definite order, by which the first evangelist had, as he tells us, profited.* The points of contact and resemblance between Luke and Mark are many. By means of the second Gospel, Luke comes in contact with Matthew, whose Gospel in its Greek form he probably did not know; thus are explained the analogies and differences of our synoptics. As the book of Acts, which comes from the same hand, closes abruptly at the time when St. Paul entered on his imprisonment in Rome, it has been supposed that the third Gospel was concluded at the same period, that is about the year 62. But this seems to us incompatible with the antecedents of the Gospel of Mark. We think it better to keep to the date inscribed in Luke's first work. In fact, we find in his prophetic portion, the same expectation of the near return of Christ after the destruction of Jerusalem, which we have noted in Matthew, with this difference, that the expressions are less definite and admit the possibility of some delay.† We are thus brought back to the period verging on the destruction of Jerusalem: the majority of the second Christian generation, to which, by his own avowal, the friend of St. Paul belonged, were living at the time of the great catastrophe. If we take into account the high antiquity of this Gospel, and the habitual accuracy of the author, carried even

* Luke declares that he will write his gospel in order, and going back to the very beginning of things (ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς); he thus implies that the documents he had before him were wanting in these two features. This reminds us of the characteristic of Mark noted by Papias, and summed up in the words, οὐ τάξει.

† Luke xxi. 31, 32.

into minutiæ in some portions of the Acts of the Apostles; if we remember all the opportunities he had, as the beloved companion of the great apostle, to receive information at first hand in Jerusalem itself, we must admit that in following him we breathe the clear, pure atmosphere of historical truth.

It is thus that the primitive tradition of the apostolic Church was fixed for ever in our synoptics; in them it appears in an individual form, and with a doctrinal seal—the only form in which it could be secured from the ever restless and legendary fluctuations of merely oral tradition.

III. The Fourth Gospel.*

The fourth Gospel transports us into a very different region from that of the synoptics. We are carried far beyond the special interests of the Church in Palestine, one of whose great aims it was to clench the link which bound it to the old covenant, even while maintaining its own privileges, as the substitute and fulfilment of the old. These questions, so warmly agitated at Jerusalem before the year 70, fall into the background in John's writings. The Pauline polemics, by which the broad human

* No book of the New Testament has given rise to more ardent polemics than this. The history of the disputes over it is one of the most important chapters of modern theology. The first serious attack on the authenticity of the fourth Gospel came from Bretschneider ("Probabilia de evang. et epist. John" 1820). He retracted his doubts. Strauss, in his first "Life of Christ," revived the controversy. He called forth the writings of Neander and Lücke. The latter has dedicated to the fourth Gospel one of the noblest theological monuments of this age. The school of Tübingen endeavoured to place the fourth Gospel in the middle of the second century, regarding it as the reconciliation of the Judæo-Christian and Pauline tendencies in a metaphysical synthesis (Schwegler, "Nach. Apost. Zeit." II. 346. 347; Zeller, "Theologisch. Jahrbuch." 1855 (p. 576-656). Baron. "Gesch. der Chr. Kirche der drei erst. Jahrh." Ritschl. at first a disciple of the Tübingen school, retracted his first ideas about the fourth Gospel in the second edition of his book, entitled "Die Altcatholische Kirche." Recently M. Renan has laid down a theory of the Gospel of John, quite opposed to the Tübingen school, but which does not at all re-establish the authenticity of this book, since he supposes every kind of interpolation.

character of Christianity were established, are everywhere taken for granted: the victory is complete, and no more a matter of controversy; the deep furrow so painfully made is covered now with ripening grain. The work to be done is not, as in Mark's Gospel, to trace evangelical facts; the thought at first scarcely indicated, comes out now like the flower from its cup. What we have before us is not the Gospel of fulfilment, nor that of power, nor of Christian universality: it is, according to the beautiful expression of Clement of Alexandria, the Gospel of the spirit, which starting from established data soars into the region of sublime metaphysics; it is the Gospel of the ideal, but of the ideal incorporated in a living history. More exact in his narrative, and throughout more profound in his prevailing thought than the three other evangelists, presenting that blending of pathos and speculation, of tender mysticism and doctrinal elevation, which gives it its singular charm, it answers perfectly to the period assigned to it by the oldest tradition, as well as to the known character of its author.

In fact, if we contemplate the Church at the close of the first century; in the evening of the apostolic age, we shall see that no teaching could be more appropriate to it than that of the fourth Gospel; a great event has transpired; the holy city of Judaism is sacked; the temple is a heap of ruins. The

Strauss has taken up the polemics in his new "Vie de Jésus," with singular bitterness. Schenkel in his book entitled "Characterbild Jesu" is very decided against the genuineness of the fourth Gospel (p. 348). Weizæcker has taken in his last work a middle course; he refers the Gospel to the close of the first century, but attributes it to a friend of St. John ("Untersuch. ueber die Evang. Geschichte," p. 187.) Thus it nears the hypothesis of M Nicolas, who ascribes it to John the Presbyter. ("Etudes Critiques sur le N. T.," pp. 206, 207). We have not been able to find anything new in M. Scholten's Work, translated by M. Réville. Among the remarkable books on St John by which we support our views the principal are Lücke's "Commentary;" the part of Bleek's "Introduction to the New Testament," which refers to this subject, and which has been translated into French by M. Bruston; the noble "Commentary" of M. F. Godet so rich and deep; and M. Astie's important work.

judgment of God has been executed with demonstration upon the stiff-necked people; the ancient mould into which the Christian idea had been cast in its first form, is broken; Christianity has shaken off its swaddling clothes, and, freed from all the straits of Judaism, acknowledges itself the religion of mankind. It is not necessary to bring forward prophetical texts, to declare the abolition of the national privileges; the will of God is read in characters of fire on the smoking ashes of the ruined sanctuary. The Christ has not appeared on that cloud, from whence burst the thunder-bolts, which crushed the pride of Jerusalem. The Church knows now that it is engaged in a long combat and a long travail. Its centre is no longer at Jerusalem, but at Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia Minor, the brilliant city, where, for long, the thoughts of the east have been meeting and blending with those of the west. Ephesus is the native soil of heresy, of the false Gnosticism which seeks to destroy Christianity, by interpreting it, that is by fashioning it to its own likeness. St. Paul noted the first appearance of this bold and skilful essay to fuse the truths of the Gospel in a burning crucible, from which were to come forth so many strange combinations, so many wild speculations. Towards the end of the first century, it assumed, under Cerinthus, a less vague character, and led to a singular system, which under Christian names reproduced the old oriental dualism, with its extravagant idealisation. It was not enough to set in opposition to this composite and fanciful Christ of the Gnostics, the simple Gospel of fact—that Christian drama, which availed to conquer the rough Romans; the moment was come when a Gospel of the idea must be presented, or, rather, when the idea must be disengaged from the fact, in order to set in full light the deepest portion of the teaching of Christ—that which bears on His nature and His work—if only this might have been preserved in the mind and heart of some immediate disciple. The most ancient tradition names this disciple; it is John, the son of Zebedee, the old man mature in faith and thought, the

last survivor of the Apostles, the venerable saint whose strength was renewed like the eagle's. Under this image of an eagle, Christian antiquity loved to symbolise the fourth Gospel, so high did it seem to soar towards the eternal light. "While the three other evangelists," says St. Augustine, "remain below with the man Christ Jesus, and speak but little of His Godhead, John, as if impatient of setting his foot on the earth, rises from the very first words of his Gospel, not only above earth, and the span of air and sky, but above all angels and invisible powers, till he reaches Him by whom all things were made. Not in vain are we told in the Gospels, that John leaned on the bosom of the Lord at the last Passover feast. He drank in secret at that divine spring. *Ex illo pectore in secreto bibebat.*"* St. Augustine was right to connect the character of the evangel with that of the evangelist; for if it be true that a man's style is the man, there is abundant reason to conclude that none but John could have written this incomparable Scripture.

We cannot here do more than broadly indicate the great features of the life and character of St. John. Born on the shores of the Lake of Tiberias, far from Pharisaic influence, the son of an ardent and pious mother,† whose first care had been to nourish in his heart the hopes which filled her own, he grew up in an atmosphere most favourable to his preparation for his future mission. The Baptist had no more faithful disciple; Jesus Christ had none more intimate; He made John not only His apostle but His friend. John loved Him as a divine brother; he could never separate the person of the Master from His doctrine. Of a nature deep and contemplative, he had as much fire in his heart as the impetuous Peter and the valiant Paul; but it was an inward fervour, which manifested itself less by action or conflict, than as one of those

* St. August. "Tractat. 36 in Johann."

† Salome, who is erroneously supposed to be a sister of Mary, was of the number of the women who followed Jesus to the last, ministering to Him of their substance (Matt. xxvii. 56, comp. with Mark xv. 40, 41).

absorbing affections, concentrated on one object, which are by turns tender and terrible, because they cannot brook to see that object insulted or misjudged. The John of the synoptics is already the well-beloved disciple, but he is also the Son of Thunder; it is he who would call for fire to come down and consume the impious city that refuses to receive the Lord.*

Even after the decisive crisis of his moral life, when he has learnt from his dying Master to what a length pardoning love can reach, we yet find in him ebullitions of indignation against the adversaries of Jesus, and yet more against the false friends who could betray Him with a kiss. Thus he speaks with peculiar bitterness of heresy, which is in his eyes the most dangerous of foes. It is John who in his letters would not have the propagator of false doctrine received into the house, nor eaten with;† and who will not meet Cerinthus even at the public bath.‡ He is of the race of the mystics and contemplatists; he speaks their language, and delights in brief sentences not connected by dialectic links. John is the apostle of the absolute. Everything or nothing is his motto; the opposition between the friends and the enemies of Christ, appears to him strong as that between light and darkness.

During the period of triumphant action and sharp polemics, (which is that of Peter and Paul), he remains in retirement with Mary the mother of Jesus, who is his sacred legacy from the Cross; he is not inactive, but he keeps in the shade, and there matures, as he lives ever mindful of his heavenly Friend, who is also his God. He sees Him, in vision, in the bosom of the Father, as he himself had leaned on His breast in an hour of sorrowful love.§ There is nothing to prevent our supposing that in these years of calm and silence he may have, like the other disciples, noted down in writing all the words of Jesus, as the Holy Spirit brought them to his remembrance. If there was one apostle called more than another to preserve the loftiest and tenderest tones of the teaching of Christ, that

* Luke ix. 54. † 2 John, 10. ‡ Eusebius, IV. 14. § John i. 18.

one was assuredly the beloved disciple. The first time he broke his long silence, men seemed to hear again the voice of ancient prophecy. It was just after the fearful persecution of Nero, on the rock of Patmos, that John wrote the epopœia of martyrdom; he recounted the sufferings and proclaimed the triumph of the wounded and bleeding Church;* and this he did, not as a Jew, narrow and infatuated in his prejudices, but as a disciple of that new covenant which embraces all the nations of the earth.† He borrowed nothing from ancient prophecy but its sublime symbols and its tongue of fire, to proclaim the divine judgments. The Son of Thunder reappears in these terrible pages, but we mark also the disciple, the worshipper of Jesus, who is presented to us at once as the Lamb slain and as the Word of God, the Eternal one before whom the whole heavens bow. Under this dazzling drapery, it is the true heart of John which beats, that deep, tender heart, vehement alike in its love and its reprobation.

An unchallenged tradition shows him subsequently at Ephesus, the Father venerated by all the Churches, presenting in his great old age, the purest type of the spiritual priesthood in the new covenant,‡ changed almost into the image of Him whom he never ceased to contemplate, the living representative of the love which stoops to save that which is lost, as is witnessed by the touching story of the young brigand, followed

* The external proof is conclusive, in our view, in favour of the Revelation. Papias based on it his millenarian ideas, according to Andreas ("Præfat. in comment. in Apocalyps"). Justin Martyr quotes directly from it ("Dial. cum Tryph.," p. 179). The letter of the martyrs of Lyons makes constant allusions to it (Eusebius, V. 1; Irenæus, IV. 20); Clement of Alexandria ("Stromat.," VI. 66); Tertullian ("Adv. Marc.," III., 143); Origen, Eusebius (VI. 25): confirm these testimonies. The doubts expressed about the Revelation by Denys of Alexandria are founded on doctrinal reasons. See in my "Histoire des trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise," Vol. II., p. 491, the note in which I give my reasons for placing the composition of this book before that of the Gospel.

† Rev. vii. 9.

‡ Πέταλον περφορηκώς. (Polycrates in Eusebius, "H.E.," III. 3).

by the aged apostle into the very haunt of his sin.* We see him at issue with rising Gnosticism, and meeting it hand to hand in his first epistle. If a Jacob Bœhme was able to rise from the level of a workman's stall to the boldest height of speculation, there can be no impossibility in conceiving that a fisherman of Galilee, endowed with a great mind, and borne on the wings of inspiration, may have seen clearly into the speculations of his age, especially if we remember the sacred motive which impelled him to penetrate them; he was not led on by idle curiosity, but was seeking by all and any means, to break the accursed spell which was ruining souls. His first epistle, the genuineness of which is generally admitted,† is enough to prove that he had really acquired this kind of culture.

In the city of Ephesus appears a Gospel, which answers to all the requirements of this condition of the age, a Gospel which in its very prologue sets the true Christ of the Church in opposition to the Christ of oriental Gnosticism, in which the history of Jesus is invested with the charms of a tender mysticism, in which the contest between the powers of good and evil forms the very basis of the narrative, in every page of which words of pathos touch the heart to its depths, in which more than one trait of marvellous exactness reveals the ocular witness;—a Gospel, in short, in which the whole disposition of events is so perfect, that it at once commends itself to the mind. The style is much more correct than that of Matthew and Mark, although the Hebraic element is recognisable in the sententious turn of phrase; it is evident that the author had long lived in a Greek atmosphere and had come to breathe it naturally.‡ It is also evident from his perfect acquaintance

* Eusebius, "H.E.," III. 42.

† Papias in Eusebius, "H.E." III. 39; Polycarp, "Ad Phillipp.," VII.; Irenæus, "Contr. Hæres.," III. 16; Clement of Alexandria, "Stromat.," II. 389; Tertullian. "Ad Praxeam," XV.

‡ The author of the fourth Gospel is perfectly familiar with the peculiar conditions of Judaism, with Jewish laws and feasts, and with the text of the Old Testament (ii. 13; xii. 1; xviii. 25). He

with the peculiar institutions of Judaism that he was a Jew by birth; but the great freedom with which he speaks of his countrymen, pointing out his separation from them, shows how entirely he had shaken off the yoke of the synagogue. Never was there between a writer and his book, a more striking accordance than between the fourth Gospel and the character of John, such as the history of the first century reveals him to us. Let us add that the author designates himself in a manner which, though indirect, is unmistakeable. He was an ocular witness of that which he recounts. "We beheld His glory," says he, speaking of Jesus Christ, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* He is spoken of more than once in the fourth Gospel, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, and the narrative is distinctly ascribed to him.‡ Now this beloved disciple can be only one of the three apostles who were in close intimacy with the Saviour. He is distinguished from Peter,† and he cannot be James the Greater, who was slain by Herod Agrippa. We must then recognise in him John the son of Zebedee.‡ The highest tradition of the ancient Church confirms the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, and attributes it to John by a body of testimony which constitutes valid evidence.

We will not pass in review the passages by which we are certified of the universal and entire acceptance of our four Gospels in the second century. But, on account of the importance of the point at issue, we will quote the principal passages

inserts, when occasion calls for it, the original Hebrew. See xi. 39, 40, which is a translation of Isaiah vi. 10. See also xiii. 18, which is a translation of Psalm xli. 10. On the other hand he gives explanations of Jewish customs which would have been needless to his countrymen (i. 39; ii. 6; xi. 18; xix. 20). He speaks of the Jews as of foreigners: *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* (v. 1).

* Ch. i. 14. ‡ Ch. xxi. 20, 24.

† Ch. xiii. 24; xx. 2; xxi. 20.

‡ John was the only one who could speak of John the Baptist, calling him simply John, because he knew that he could not be confounded with himself in the book which was from his own hand.

which establish the authenticity of John's Gospel. It is well known that in the age of Origen, of Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, no doubt existed as to its genuineness.* The testimony of Irenæus is of yet more consequence to us. His millenarian speculations and bold allegories, of which Strauss makes so much, do not prevent his being separated from John by only one intermediary, viz., Polycarp at whose feet he passed his youth. The bishop of Lyons would not express himself with such perfect assurance upon the Gospel of John, if Polycarp had not spoken to him of it; the silence of his master on such a book would have been to him a reason for doubting its authenticity; it would have withheld him from any categorical statements with reference to it. Polycarp himself came to Rome about the year 163, at a time when the fourth Gospel was accepted by that great Church, as is proved by Muratori's canon, which expressly recognises its admission at the centre of western Christianity. Is it to be supposed that the friend of St. John would have sanctioned, by his silence, a fraud so censurable as the fabrication of such a work? If he uttered any protest, Irenæus could not have been ignorant of it. His testimony therefore carries with it, by implication, that of Polycarp. Theophilus of Antioch (176) furnishes us with the first explicit passage which is wholly undisputed.† Apollinaris of Hierapolis,‡ interposing in the year 170 in the dispute upon the celebration of the Passover, points out the discrepancies of the Gospels on this point, which implies that he was acquainted with our four canonical narratives.

Polycrates of Ephesus speaks of John as the disciple who leaned on the bosom of Jesus; now he could only have learned

* Irenæus, "C. Hæres.," III. 11; Tertullian, "Adv. Marc.," IV., 2, 3. Origen's "Commentary on St. John," vol. IV. of Huet.

† Ὅθεν διδάσκουσιν ἡμᾶς αἱ ἅγιαι γραφαὶ καὶ πάντες οἱ πνευματοφόροι, ἐξ ὧν Ἰωάννης λεγει· Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος (Theophil., "Ad. Antalyc.," II. 22).

‡ "Chron. Paschale," p. 14. Apollinaris mentions also the piercing of the side of Jesus, in evident allusion to John xix. 34.

this fact from the fourth Gospel.* Justin Martyr borrows from him thoroughly characteristic words, such as these, "Jesus Christ said: except ye be born again ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." And "it is manifest to all that it is impossible for those who have been once born to enter into the wombs of those that bare them."† That which is more weighty than a few quotations, is Justin's prevailing point of view; his doctrine of the Word is entirely drawn from the fourth Gospel. The apostolic Fathers allude to passages of St. John. We read these words in the undisputed portion of the letter of Ignatius to the Romans: "I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and I desire the drink of God, His blood."‡ Polycarp, to whose testimony we have already alluded, quotes the first epistle of John in his letter to the Philippians.§ Papias does the same in the short fragment of his which we possess; there is nothing to prove that in other portions of his writings, now lost, this father may not have quoted the fourth Gospel.‖ At any rate, all testimony given to the first Epistle reflects on this, so evident is it that the two scriptures are by the same hand. In the apostolic Fathers, as in Justin Martyr, there are more than texts and allusions,—there is a peculiar mode of thought and of speech, a doctrinal type which carries us back to St. John. Whence could Ignatius, and Polycarp, and the unknown author of the epistle to

* Eusebius, "H. E.," V. 24.

Justin; Apol., I. 61. It is pretended this quotation may be from Matt. xviii. 18, but the second clause of the sentence does not permit this interpretation. In order to hold with Strauss, that Justin took his quotation from the "Clementines," where it is in fact found, it would be needful to prove that the reverse was not the case. What would be gained, besides, on the supposition of a quotation from the "Clementines," since it is certain that they quote directly from the fourth Gospel? See the other quotations of Justin, "Apol.," II. 6; "Dial. c. Tryph.," LXIII.

‡ *Ἄρτον Θεοῦ θέλω, ὅς ἐστιν σάρξ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ πόμα θέλω.* (Comp. John vi. 33–51.)

§ Polycarp, "Ep. ad. Philipp." VII.; Eusebius. III. 39.

‖ "Epiph. Hæres." LI. 3; Irenæus ("C. Hæres," III. 11.)

Diognetus, have derived the doctrine of the Word—light and life of the world—if not in this great school?

Heresy in the second century is not less positive than orthodoxy, as to the authenticity of the Gospel of John. Alike by the use it makes of it and the dispute it wages with it, it implies its universal recognition. The sect of the *Alogi*, which appeared about the year 150, is the only exception. But its opposition was founded mainly on dogmatic grounds, as is indicated by the name it chose. The *Alogi* gave weight indeed to the discrepancies between the fourth Gospel and the synoptics, but that which they principally objected to in the narrative of St. John was the doctrinal tone. They did not dispute its high antiquity, since they attributed it to Cerinthus. Marcion, who taught at Rome about the year 140, started by admitting its canonicity,* and only rejected it subsequently on the ground of a supposed opposition between Paul and John, which he thought he detected in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians.† Thus Marcion explicitly recognised the fourth Gospel as the work of John; he rejected it precisely on account of its authenticity, because he imagined that this apostle had opposed the doctrine of Paul, whose orthodoxy alone he admitted. The Montanist heresy, which arose about the middle of the second century, rests entirely upon a false interpretation of the writings of John; it borrows from the fourth Gospel the name of the *Paraclete* given to the Holy Spirit. The "Clementines," which date from the year 160, contain a direct and indisputable quotation from this Gospel; it is found in the last part of the work recently discovered. This contains word for word a well-known passage of St. John. "Therefore our Lord, in reply to those who questioned him about the man blind from his birth, whom he had cured, and

Tertullian. "De Carne Christi."

† Marcion nactus epistolam ad Galatas, connititur ad destruendum statum eorum evangeliorum quæ propria et sub apostolorum nomine eduntur ("Adv. Marc.," IX. 3).

who asked him, Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind? said: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the glory of God might be made manifest in him."* Tatian, the disciple of Justin, included the Gospel of John in his work on the Four; he quoted it as holy Scripture. The Valentinian Gnostics had it in constant use.† Heraclion (in the year 150) the immediate disciple of Valentinus, devoted an extensive commentary to it, from which it may be inferred that the book had long been invested with high authority. Valentinus used it in support of his doctrine; the famous manuscript discovered on Mount Athos in 1861, and known under the name of *Philosophoumena*, contains two direct allusions of the celebrated Gnostic to passages in this Gospel. He borrows from it these words of Jesus. The Saviour said: "All that went before me are thieves and robbers";‡ he calls the devil *the prince of this world.* Further, Valentinus constantly made use of the terminology of the prologue. Basilides preceded Valentinus; he taught at Alexandria about the year 120. Now the fragment of his works found also in the *Philosophoumena* contains two quotations from St. John. "And thus," he says, "it is said in the Gospels: that was the true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."§ More than this, the writings of St. Hippolytus carry us back to

* "Clementines," Dressel ed.; "Homilies," XIX. 22. (Comp. John ix. 23.)

† Eusebius, "H. E.," XIV 29. "Eo quod est secundum Johannem plenissime utentes" (Irenæus "Adv. Hæres.," III. 2).

‡ "Philosoph.," Dunker Edit., p. 284 (Comp. John x. 8.)

§ Ibid, pp. 336, 376. There is another quotation not so certain from John ii. 4. The attempt has been made to do away with the evidence of these quotations, on the ground that they are introduced with these words:—"We shall see how Basilides, how Isidorus, and his whole school, do not simply attack St. Matthew, but also Jesus Christ." It is inferred from these words, that no distinction can be made in the "Philosoph." between the quotations of Basilides and those of his disciples. But evidently the meaning of the author is simply that the disciples followed in the steps of their master.

the heretics of the beginning of the second century, to those *Ophites*, who were the direct successors of the false doctors of the apostolic age, and who lived between the years 110 and 120. All appeal to the fourth Gospel. The most ancient of them, the *Naassenians*, who are on the verge of the first century, quote verbatim a passage from the third chapter as a biblical declaration.* The *Perates*† do the same. And we are thus brought close up to the assumed date of our Gospel.

The most inveterate enemies of Christianity, such as Celsus, admitted its authenticity.‡ The oldest apocryphal Gospels tend to confirm it. Thus, for example, the *Acts of Pilate* quoted by Justin Martyr are obviously formed upon its model.§ The scene of the appearing of Jesus before Pilate is reproduced almost word for word from John xviii.‖ Finally, the fourth Gospel bears the attestation of its own origin. There is reason for thinking that it may have closed with chap. xx., the last words of which contain the conclusion of the narrative. But whatever opinion may be entertained about the commencement of chap. xxi., it is certain that the 24th verse is not by John, for it is wanting in all the old manuscripts. Now it is worded thus: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true." Evidently these are his friends, the spiritual heirs of the apostle, who, having received the Gospel from his hand, appended to it this seal of assurance.¶ These are surely those

* Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ εἰρημένον, then comes John iii. 1–3. (p. 125.)

† P. 98 Quotation of John iii. 17.

‡ Celsus contrasted the fourth Gospel with the synoptics in his famous pamphlet. See Origen "Contra Celsum, passim."

§ Justin, "Apolog.," I. 35, 48.

‖ See Tischendorf's edition of the "Apocryphal Gospels."

¶ Strauss maintains that the author of the fourth Gospel might well speak so of himself, and bases his remark on an analogous passage in the "Commentaries of Cæsar." It is not necessary to enlarge upon the differences between the proud recital of the great Roman conqueror, in which he assumes the impersonal in order to set his exploits in the stronger relief, and the general character of

presbyters of whom Irenæus speaks, those survivors of the great apostolic age, who surrounded the old man at Ephesus, and received his last benedictions, when, worn out with age, he was carried into the holy assembly to sum up all his life and all his teaching in the words, "My little children, love one another."

From all these passages it follows not only that the Gospel of John was accepted, in the year 170, by the universal Church in all its sections in the east and west, but that testimonies, conclusive by their number and value, carry us back to Justin Martyr, and from Justin Martyr to the very confines of the apostolic age. Yet more; heresy unites with orthodoxy in guaranteeing the authenticity of this book, the traces of which are found thoroughout the ecclesiastical literature of that time and of all times. It appears to us that we must for ever give up the appeal to historical proof, if it may be branded with suspicion when it appears in such accumulation. Nothing is more vain than to seek to evolve from the movement of thought in the second century, that Gospel, which was itself the impulse of the movement and its guiding force. Doubtless the same hypothesis will yet reappear, for the human mind is inexhaustible in its resources for self-deception, but it will not long endure a critical examination. M. Renan has set aside lightly, and without discussion, the conclusions of Baur—of so little weight did they appear to him—and has assigned our Gospel to the date indicated.

Upon the question as to what author is to be accredited with this document of the first century, opinions are divided; some name John the presbyter, a mysterious personage of the apostolic age known only by name;* they ground their opinion

the narrative of the fourth Gospel. Beyschlag ("Die Auferstehung Christi," p. 36), remarks with justice, that the 21st chap. brings us necessarily to a period very close to the death of the apostle, when that event took his friends by surprise, in consequence of a false interpretation of the words of Jesus (John xxi. 21, 22).

* M. Nicolas, "Etudes Critiques sur le Nouv. Test." p. 206.

on the designation of *elder*, or *presbyter*, placed at the head of the second epistle of John.* Others speak of the nameless conclave around this apostle, which they call the school of Ephesus.† In favour of the first hypothesis is urged the difficulty of ascribing the fourth Gospel to the son of Zebedee. This objection we have already met. When we are told that no apostle is ever called an elder or presbyter, we content ourselves with citing the following text from St. Peter, "The elders which are among you I exhort; who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ."‡ The advocates of the second hypothesis complain of the excessive idealisation of the fourth Gospel; according to them, the deeds and discourses of the Saviour are reproduced in it with extreme freedom, or rather they are re-fused in the crucible of the ardent enthusiasm, fired at Ephesus by the words of John. An ocular witness, an apostle might indeed inspire a narrative of this sort, but he could not himself write it, and transfigure to such a degree the history, which had been enacted before his eyes.§ To which we reply, that in a time of scrupulous adherence to apostolical tradition, it is impossible to suppose so bold a deviation, on the part of John's auditors and disciples, from the teaching delivered to them by him; nothing could be more contrary to the custom of the time. Nor is any passage brought forward in support of this supposition, invented only, as we shall soon see, to establish another no less arbitrary; for we dispute the character of exaggerated idealisation attributed to the fourth Gospel.

The same hypothesis had been already developed in France with far less disguise. St. John, it has been pretended, in his extreme old age, hardly recognised himself in the midst of the

* 2 John i.

† M. Renan, "Introduction to the Life of Jesus."

‡ Ὁ *συμπρεσβύτερος* (1 Peter v. 1).

§ Weizsæcker, "Ueber die Evangelische Geschichte," 1864. p. 289. This very remarkable work, exhibiting the loftiest intellect, carries the arbitrary much too far in questions of criticism.

contradictory influences by which he was assailed at Ephesus; but, very jealous of his credit, he dictated before he died, some vague and incoherent narratives, semi-gnostic in substance but tolerably correct in date, and above all very personal, he betraying no little jealousy of his companions in labour, especially of Peter. These recitals were so arranged as to serve his petty rancours, and to set his own character in the light, with that skill which never forsook him even before the cross of his Master, and after the martyrdom of his friends. Naturally, the disciples of the old apostle thought it no wrong to arrange in their own method such a document, and to introduce into it subtle metaphysics, and utterances "crude and clumsy," such as the prayer in chap. 17.* "Pretentious, weary, ill-written tirades," exclaims a refined critic, as he quotes those pages before which we bow and worship! There can be no reply to such a judgment, for the elements of a common appreciation are wanting. As to those petty and ignoble passions which are said to have inspired John's most pathetic narratives, we leave such insinuations to the conscience which is able to distinguish the grand and the pure, from the base and vile, and does not confound the mean rivalries of acrimonious men of letters, with the noble fraternity of the apostles. But that which fairly comes under a critical examination is the unity of the work, which is demonstrated by the unity of plan and of style, and by the perfect harmony between the thought and the language, which betokens something very different from the babblings of an old man, re-compiled by his disciples. In truth, from the first chapter to the last, the history of Jesus is unfolded in one uniform plan, descending into the minutest detail.

The fundamental idea of this Gospel is plainly set forth in its conclusion: "These things were written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."† In the prologue Jesus is

* M. Renan, "Life of Jesus." Introduction, 22. † John xx. 31.

represented as the Son of God, bringing life and light to the world He had created; He is the word "made flesh" and dwelling among men, "full of grace and truth," received by those who are born of God, rejected by others. All the first part of the Gospel, from chapter i. to xiii., traces out this manifestation of the Word to men, and its twofold effect in a circle ever widening till the final conflict comes. From chapter xiii. to xviii. we have the confidential revelations of Jesus to His disciples—all the scenes in the upper chamber. In chapters xviii. and xix. we witness the crisis of the conflict; even at the foot of the Cross we find the great division between those who love and those who hate, between the children of light and the children of darkness. Chapter xx. is devoted to the resurrection. With this firmly-marked outline, the narrative proceeds in clear and consistent order; the chronological divisions are distinct, and the style is always uniform. It is to us, then, an established truth that the fourth Gospel is no mosaic of texts proceeding from many hands, the prolix stories of an old man, revised and completed by his friends, but a book deeply impressed with the seal of unity. This characteristic did not escape Strauss, who calls the author of this book the *Corraggio* of the evangelists, and admires his inimitable art in distributing the light and shade, so as to produce such impressive effects. Such an estimate is widely removed from that of the French critic; the two judgments contradict each other; where the one sees clumsy metaphysics, the other recognises the finish of art. To us it is the true sublimity of the divine, embodied in the truest human form.

Having now established the unity of the structure of this Gospel (the 21st chap. always excepted), and having set aside the hypothesis of a composite work, the produce of many hands and of numerous emendations, we proceed to the objections drawn from the book itself.

The inaccuracies of the narrative are urged. Their small

importance transmutes the objection into a proof in its favour,* and we pass on to more specious arguments. In order to deprive the fourth Gospel of its historical character, there is an insisting upon the points in which it differs from the synoptics; the conclusion is drawn that there is a wide departure in this account from primitive tradition. We have already shown that the two forms of the narrative rest upon the same historical basis,—that the synoptics imply the journeys to Jerusalem, as the fourth Gospel implies the work in Galilee. There remains no doubt one difficulty hitherto insoluble—the difference in the date given for the death of the Saviour—which the fourth Gospel places on the 14th of Nisan, that is to say, on the day of preparation for the feast, while the synoptics speak of the paschal supper as taking place on the very day of the festival, from which it follows that the crucifixion must have taken place on the 15th of Nisan.† But the account of the fourth Gospel is the most in conformity with the usages of Judaism, which made the day of the Passover an exceptional day, on

* Objection is made to chap. i. 28—the passage which points out the spot where John was baptizing, under the name of Bethany—as if the historian who has marked so exactly the locality of the village of Lazarus could confound it with a place so distant from Jerusalem, and as if it were not possible to suppose a second Bethany in Peræa. Objection is again taken to John iv. 5, where Sychar is put instead of Sychem. The mere admission of a difference of pronunciation in the dialects of the time is enough to obviate the difficulty. If the author calls Caiaphas *the high priest that year* (xviii. 13), there is no reason to conclude that he represents the high priesthood as an annual office. It is certain that it was subject at this period to frequent mutations. The expression employed is in no way extraordinary (See Bleek, "Einleit. in N. T." p. 208).

† According to the synoptics, Jesus really ate the paschal lamb on the same day as the Jews (Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12–16; Luke xxii. 7, 9). The day of his death would then be the 15th of Nisan, the great day of the feast. According to John on the other hand, the Lord was crucified on the day of preparation for the feast, that is on the 14th of Nisan. (John xiii. 1, 29; xviii. 28; xix. 14–31). The expedient proposed for evading the difficulty appears to us insufficient, as we shall show in the account of the Passion.

which the Sabbatical regulations were enforced with an inflexible rigour,* incompatible with the trial of a great cause by the Sanhedrim, with the preparation of sweet spices by the holy women attached to the Saviour,† and the return from the fields of Simon of Cyrene.‡ To allow of Barabbas being released in time, we must suppose the Passover to have been not yet eaten. It is in vain to urge in objection, the well-known practice of the apostle John, who celebrated the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, conformably to the tradition of the synoptics. What John celebrated on that day was not the Christian Passover properly so called, the observance of which was not as yet either general or determined, but the Jewish Passover; in this he only followed the decisions of the council at Jerusalem, according to which the Christians of Jewish extraction were to respect the customs of their nation. These decisions had fallen, in many points, into desuetude, but there is nothing to show that John did not continue to act in conformity with them. In any case, as he did not claim to be celebrating the institution of the Lord's Supper, his practice gives no contradiction to the narrative ascribed to him.§ It is impossible to deny the superiority of the fourth Gospel in the logical statement of facts. It alone gives a sufficient explanation of the decisive crisis, which led to the condemnation of Christ, by tracing in broad outline His disputes with the Sanhedrim, and by relating in detail the most astonishing of His miracles wrought at the gates of the holy city. No

* The 15th of Nisan was regarded as a feast as solemn as that of the Sabbath. All work was forbidden, except the preparation of the elements (Exod. xii. 16). This concession is withdrawn in Leviticus and in Numbers (Lev. xxiii. 7; Numb. xxviii. 18). The Talmud made these restrictions yet more severe. How can we suppose, on such a day, all the judicial apparatus implied in the synoptical account? According to Josephus, the Romans respected the Jewish Sabbath. ("Ant." xvi. 6, 2). See Bleek's work already quoted, p. 182.

† Luke xxiii. 56.

‡ Mark xv. 21.

§ Bleek's work, previously quoted.

argument can be drawn from the blanks observable in his narrative. The author was acquainted with the synoptics, and did not feel himself called to reproduce their records; there is, beside, nothing systematic in these omissions, as if he had intentionally, and with a set purpose avoided those circumstances, which would bring out prominently the humanity of Christ: he has described Him to us as overcome with weariness and grief, and it is he who records His cry of anguish in the temple, which is indeed the earnest of the groans of Gethsemane: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour."*

It has been again objected to our Evangelist, that he has suppressed all gradation in the manifestation of Messiah, while in the synoptics Jesus reveals Himself only by degrees, and according to circumstances.† But it must be remembered, that John passes over in silence an important portion of the career of Christ in Galilee, and that his great design is to give us the highest and deepest revelations of the Master concerning Himself. We maintain, however, that lofty as is the point from which this evangelist starts, he does, nevertheless, bring out a progressive revelation of the glory of Christ, from the first discourse at Cana, to the sublime communications of the upper chamber.

It is the discourses of the fourth Gospel, however, which are most strongly assailed. On the one hand, their anti-Judaic and metaphysical character is exaggerated, as on the other, the pretended Judaism of the synoptics is inordinately pressed. There is an endeavour to establish as marked an opposition between our Gospel and its assumed author, as between Gnosticism and fanatical Judæo-Christianity. The conclusion lies on the surface. This Gospel, it is said, could not have come from a medium so opposed to the spirit which animates it. It is the product of Gnosticism, and of a Gnosticism fa

* John xii. 27. † Schenkel.

enough advanced to treat with the opposing doctrine, as one power with another; it is then nothing else than the treaty of peace signed in the middle of the second century, between Paulinism and Judæo-Christianity upon the cloudy heights of metaphysics. We will not stay to refute this extreme opinion, represented with so much brilliance by the development school. Historical evidence has sufficed to set it aside. But its main point is still held.* A pretended doctrinal incompatibility is always asserted between the fourth Gospel and the synoptics; and, in consequence, between the Scripture ascribed to John, and John himself, who was one of the twelve. This opposition vanishes before an attentive examination.

Neither are the synoptics imbued with a Judaistic spirit to the degree pretended, nor is the fourth Gospel as anti-Judaistic as is affirmed. We have already brought out the elements of universality contained in our three first canonical narratives. Matthew, like Luke, admits a wide extension of the kingdom of God; the baptismal formula suffices to vindicate for the gospel of the twelve, the character of a world-wide Christianity and the elements of the metaphysics of the fourth Gospel. The first chapters of Matthew and Luke contain the most explicit commentary on the famous text: "The Word was made flesh."† On the other hand, the Gospel assigned to St. John fully recognises the privileges of the old covenant, as proved by the divine words: "Salvation is of the Jews"‡ This one utterance refutes absolutely the presence of even the most modified Gnosticism. There is an attempt to make John one of the heads of Judæo-Christianity, in order to deprive him of the honour of having written the Gospel of the Spirit. No one disputes that he, like the other disciples, started with the most materialistic ideas of the kingdom of Messiah, and that he stood in need of a great moral transformation. But, after the

* Schenkel and Strauss have recently taken it up.

† John i. 14. ‡ Chapter iv. 22.

Pentecost, we do not see him taking any prominent part in the Church of the upper chamber; he hastened to support the proselytising movement which had declared itself in Samaria;* at the time of the Council at Jerusalem he held out the hand of fellowship to the apostle of the Gentiles, as we learn from the famous passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, so controverted of late years, but so plain to the unbiassed mind.† What difficulty is there in supposing that, under the teachings of experience, and under the influence of inspiration, the great soul of John may have gradually expanded? Against this is urged the ardent Judaism of the Revelation, but this we have already reduced to its just value; we have traced in it, in a form necessarily borrowed from ancient prophecy, the fundamental doctrines of the fourth Gospel, namely,—adoration of the Word, redemptive sacrifice, and salvation for all nations. The representation of the last judgment, preceded by so many preliminary judgments; the description of the resurrection of the dead, and of the glorious return of Christ, recall, doubtless, the fervid colouring of the Hebrew prophets; but there is nothing in these words in opposition to the Gospel, which, by the admission of the most eminent opponent of the authenticity of the Revelation, did not stop at a purely moral conception of judgment and the resurrection.‡ So far from the author of the fourth Gospel having borrowed from Gnosticism the terms, the *Word*, the *Life*, the *Light*, the *only Begotten Son;* it was Gnosticism which took from him these metaphysical expressions; they had, in truth, the double advantage of lending themselves to subtle interpretations, while they were consecrated by the reverence of the Church. We do not deny that John spoke, in a measure, the philosophical language of his age and his

* Acts viii. 14.

† "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." (Gal. ii. 9).

‡ See Lücke's "Commentary on John," v. 28, 29.

contemporaries. There is nothing more strange in this than in Paul's quoting classic poetry at Athens. Only, it can never be established, that with the words, John appropriated the thought; for nothing is more opposed to his prologue than Platonic dualism, or the false idealism of the East. Gnosticism was sufficiently advanced at Ephesus, at the close of the first century, for there to be a perfect response in the fourth Gospel to the mental condition of the times. Through the *Philosophoumena* we watch the development of heresy, and the wild systems, made known to us by the books of Hippolytus, carry us back definitely to the times of St. John.*

One last question remains to be examined; it is closely connected with the foregoing. Several theologians, who admit the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, deny its historical character, precisely on the ground of the discourses which it contains. They regard it as only an essay of Christian metaphysics, developing the favourite ideas of the author.† Facts are entirely subordinated to doctrines, and are rather symbols than records. In support of this, the difference of language is adduced between the synoptics and the narrative of John. In the latter, it is said, are found neither parables nor axiomatic sayings—nothing resembling the popular and striking tone of Christ's discourses, as given in Matthew and Luke—nothing that recalls that transparent clearness, that admirable adaptation to circumstances and to his audience; but, on the contrary, expositions always profound, turning on the most abstruse points of doctrine, sententiously expressed—such, in fact, as we meet in the Epistle of John. Let us first remark that the same man may employ different modes of speech according to the nature of the subjects of which he treats. Whatever share may be assigned to invention in the dialogues of Plato, it is certain

* See the Chapter in my "Histoire des trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise chretienne," on the "Early Gnostics," vol. ii.

† M. Reuss is the most eminent exponent of this view. "Die Gesch. Heil. Schr." N. T., § 219. "Histoire de la Théolog du Siècle Apostolique," vol. I., 2nd edition, p. 395.

that they correspond to one phase of the teaching of Socrates. Now there is assuredly as great a distance between his discourses in Xenophon and in Plato, as between the rabbi of the synoptics and the Christ of St. John. The fourth Gospel leaves on one side the ministry in Galilee, which was carried on in the midst of the common people; it passes especially under our review the disputes of Christ with the Pharisaic school at the centre of the hierarchy, and it closes with the sacred revelations of the upper chamber.

But let us not exaggerate even here; in the discourses which John records there is many a parabolic turn familiar to Jesus: we instance the allusion to the living water and to the manna, the similitude of the good shepherd and the hireling, and that of the vine and the branches.*

Nor is it more correct to pretend that in the fourth Gospel the teaching of Christ is always in a didactic form; he does not speak to the Samaritan woman in the same manner as to Nicodemus; the dialogue is perfectly natural in its form, and lends itself to the various incidents which arise. At Jerusalem, confronted with the representatives of a formalistic tradition claiming Moses as its founder, Jesus invokes the name of the great legislator; He contrasts Abraham with those who pride themselves on being his descendants.† With His disciples, at the parting hour, His language is entirely changed, and assumes a tender mysticism perfectly appropriate to those solemn moments. There is nothing fictitious in the historical framework of the narrative; it is marvellously truthful. Geographical accuracy is not neglected. The sacred historian recalls little incidental circumstances such as would not be invented. This discourse was uttered in Solomon's porch,‡ that, near the treasury in the temple;§ on another occasion, we are told it was night.‖ The last conversation of Jesus with His disciples is broken by the

* John iv. 10-12; vi. 32, 33: x. 11-14; xv. 1-6.
† Ch. v. 45; viii. 56. ‡ Ch. x. 23. § Ch. viii. 20.
‖ Ch. xiii. 30.

words, "Arise, let us go hence,"* words which nothing but a faithful recollection would have so introduced. It has been observed, with much justice, that the author of the fourth Gospel nowhere puts into the mouth of Jesus the metaphysical terms, used by himself in his own name in the prologue. Jesus never calls Himself the Word; the expressions light and life do not retain, in the discourses, the profound and metaphysical meaning which they bear in the introduction to the Gospel; they have simply the currrent acceptation.† Sometimes the interpretation which the evangelist gives of the words of the Master appears subtle; he endeavours to solve a real difficulty, and, without denying that he succeeds, it may yet be said that he would assuredly not have brought forward such and such a hard saying, if he had not received it from the lips of the Master.‡

But there is a fact more conclusive still. So little did John draw from his own mind the sublime metaphysics of the discourses of Jesus, that these metaphysics were known and admitted in the Church, before even the first line of our synoptical Gospels was written. They form the basis of the teaching of St. Paul in his letters to the Colossians and Ephesians. Nearly half a century before the composition of our fourth Gospel, the apostle of the Gentiles had declared that all things were created by the eternal Christ, and for Him, and that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily.§ In the Epistle to the Romans, the genuineness of which is uncontroverted, he had said that God has given us His Son, and that after such a gift He would assuredly freely give us all things.‖ The apostle Peter, in his first Epistle, written ten years later, but nearly thirty years before the fourth Gospel, explicitly avowed the pre-existence of Jesus, for he boldly

* Ch. xiv. 31.

† Weizsæker, "Untersuch. über die Evang. Geschichte," p. 257. The famous argument in John x. 35 would never have been invented by the author of the prologue.

‡ See John ii. 19-21. § Col. i. 16-19. ‖ Rom. viii. 32.

spoke of the spirit of prophecy as the "spirit of Christ."* We have pointed out in the synoptics passages implying the same doctrine. Thus, so far from these exalted metaphysics being an invention of the school of Ephesus, at the close of the first century, they formed an integral part of primitive tradition, from the time that this comes within our grasp in a written form. We know the reasons which made the beloved disciple their most trusty guardian; he had laid them up in his heart, and there is nothing to hinder the supposition that he may have early committed his reminiscences to his tablets. In any case, he preached his doctrine long before he composed his Gospel. Now, I ask, whence could these metaphysics have been drawn in the primitive Church at these remote times? They might find some points of connection, so to speak, in the national literature; as, for example, in the growing personification of Wisdom, which we have noted in the Proverbs and the Apocrypha; but they were none the less in collision with all Jewish prejudices and all Gentile ideas. They could have had no other source than the teaching of Jesus.

The ideal character of the Gospel of John is in no way incompatible with its claims as a history; the psychological insight which makes him discern and depict in the contest between Jesus and the Jews, the opposition between light and darkness; the sublime conception of love, which sees its elevation and triumph in its very humiliation; all these lofty ideas correspond to great realities. We should not be ready to grant that historians, who by a powerful generalisation, evolve from events their inner meaning, are thereby taxable with inexactness. Fidelity is not the monopoly of chroniclers. Has not the title of historian been always reserved for those, who have been able to show the concatenation of events, and to discern their secret springs?

If we are taxed with the analogy which exists between the style of the first Epistle of John and that of the fourth Gospel,

* 1 Peter, i. 11.

we ask first, if it seems more probable that Jesus should have moulded the mind of His disciple, or that the disciple should have fashioned the Master in his own image, after having proclaimed Him God? That some part is to be assigned to John's individuality in the reproduction of the discourses of his Master, we are quite ready to concede; he translated and compiled them; he could not give them in their entirety, nor reproduce, with perfect exactness, their original form; but, in substance, and in all important features, these are the original discourses, and it is Jesus and not John to whom we listen.

It is derogatory to this Gospel to regard it as simply the supplement of the synoptics, or a refutation of the errors of the times; it supplements and it refutes by the simple fact, that it recounts the evangelical history subsequently to the first canonical narratives, and in the midst of heresies, of which it necessarily takes note, while it yet claims to give us, in a positive and individual form, all the history of Christ. We possess in it the epitome of the teaching of the last of the apostles—of him who was nearest to the heart of Jesus. It was written at the solicitation of the Christians of Ephesus, after they had fasted and prayed to know the will of God; and thus they received from the hands of St. John the living portrait of Jesus, so much the more faithful because presenting a more lofty ideal.*

We have vindicated the trustworthiness of the four canonical Gospels. They are to us more than mere documents; they are the voice of the apostolic Church speaking at four different periods of her development. Every narrative adds some trait

* We have the following passage, touching the Gospel of John, in Muratori's "Canon:" "*Cohortantibus condiscipulis et episcopis suis, dixit: conjejunate mihi hodie trio et quid cuique fuerit revelatum, alterutrum nobis enarremus. Eâdem nocte revelatum Andreæ et apostolis, ut recognoscentibus cunctis Johannes suo nomine cuncta describeret.*" St. Jerome preserves a similar tradition: "*Coactus est ab omnibus pene Asiæ episcopis et multorum ecclesiarum legationibus de divinitate Salvatoris altius scribere.*" (Hieronym., "Præfat. in Matth.")

to the image of the Redeemer; and yet, all together, they are still only the mirror "in which we see but imperfectly," until the day of direct vision. They transmit to us with an extraordinary vitality the breath of inspiration, which animated the Church of the apostles. This divine seal reveals itself to the heart, and if there is mysticism in discerning it in our four Gospels, we readily plead guilty to the charge.

Apart from this, however, we have reasons enough, based on positive information, for concluding that our four canonical narratives are historical documents, dating from the first century. We are not, therefore, at liberty to alter them at our pleasure—to treat them as a kind of mosaic, fragments of which may be capriciously detached and rearranged in artificial combinations. Such a method might be reasonable if our synoptics were only a mass of doubtful traditions, with no other uniting bond than an accidental juxtaposition. But it is not so; they give us a consecutive narrative, arranged on a definite plan; we are, therefore, bound to take account of this plan, to explain the particular by the general, and constantly to compare our four Gospels one with another. This is our only way of escape from that unrestrained use of the arbitrary method, so common in reference to the Gospels, blending, dividing, and mutilating texts the most distinct and complete; treating the Gospel history, in a word, like a metal in fusion that may be poured at will into any mould. Truth loses much by such methods of dealing with her; which are deprived of all excuse, so soon as our canonical narratives are admitted to bear the double impress of the time of their origin, and the writers to whom we owe them. There must be an end of that divination which detaches texts, gently or otherwise, from the context, in order to educe from them a preconceived idea—a sure method of discovering everywhere one's own thought. A comparative study of the Gospels, which respects the order of time, and seeks to determine it with the most scrupulous care, costs more labour, but it brings more gain to the searcher after truth.

CHAPTER V.

DOCTRINAL BASES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.

THE doctrinal and strictly theological does not come within the scope of this book. It is not my province, then, to establish here the great doctrine which is to me the central point of Christianity—the Divinity of Christ and His Incarnation. Occasion will hereafter naturally arise for touching on this in the portion of my work devoted to the teaching of Jesus; it will be necessary to examine whether or not He truly asserts Himself to be the Son of God. Apart from this, His Divinity will shine forth from the entire history, beaming in every manifestation of Himself in the Gospel times.

Let it suffice for me to say here that I accept unreservedly the prologue of John's Gospel; it is to me the necessary introduction to the life of Jesus. Taken in itself, apart from the subtle commentaries of the metaphysicians of the fourth century, it gives us a grand and simple idea of the Redeemer of the world. By its first words it raises us to the highest conception of God, showing Him to us before the world and before time, in the very mystery of the divine life, the eternal realisation of love, the union of the Father and the Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Over this relation of Father and Son hangs a sacred veil which no human theory can pierce, for analogies are wanting, and language is unequal to the weight of such thoughts. The lightning gleam which illuminates these depths reveals to us a living, loving God, who does not need to seek in the created world the object of His love, but finds it in the Being

like Himself, who is His perfect image. To create is not then, a necessity with Him, as if only by producing a world could He emerge from an inert solitude. Creation is a free act, an act of love, accomplished by the Word. "All things were created by him and for him, and without him was not anything created that was created." The moral creation is not His work only, but also His reflection and manifestation. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. He is that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." There is, then, a natural and primordial relation between mankind and the Word. The nobler life of man is a communication of the Word. On this relation is based the possibility of the incarnation of the Son of God; for it is evident that human nature realises its ideal in Him, since in Him it finds the plentitude of moral life.

According to the prologue of John, the uncreated light of the Word shed some rays into the night of a world separated from God. "The light shineth in darkness." But when the world is to be redeemed and saved, and man lifted up to God, then "the Word is made flesh;" which signifies, not simply that He put on a human body, but became truly man. and subject to all the conditions of our existence. Jesus Christ is not the Son of God hidden in the Son of man, retaining all the attributes of Divinity in a latent state. This would be to admit an irreducible duality which would withdraw Him from the normal conditions of human life. His obedience would become illusory, and His example would be without application to our race. No; when the Word became flesh He humbled Himself, He put off His glory, being "rich he became poor; and was made in all points like as we are, only without sin;" that He might pass through the moral conflict, with all the perils of freedom. He is the Son of God, who has voluntarily abased himself; and this humiliation is the beginning, as it is the condition, of His sacrifice. Of His divinity He retained that which constitutes, in a manner, its moral essence; and He

is not the less man on that account, because man is only complete in God. Unless we would fall into a docetism which would make a phantom of Christ, and an illusion of the Gospel, we must needs admit, in all its import and with all its mystery, this humiliation of the Word,—a truth far too much lost sight of by the theological shool of the fourth century. In the preceding age, in the midst of hesitations and uncertainties of formula, there never ceased to be faith in Christ as truly Man; there was no recourse to the dogma of the two natures, but a faithful adherence to the beliefs of apostolic times, too living and too profound to be lost in such metaphysical distinctions. "*Homo factus est*," said Irenæus, "*ut nos assuefaceret fieri dei.*"

Thus, then, the Christ whose life we are about to trace, is not that strange Messiah who possesses, as God, omniscience and omnipotence; while, as man, His knowledge and power are limited. We believe in a Christ who has become truly like unto us; who was subject to the conditions of progress and the gradual development of human life; and who was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." From such a point of view, the Gospel is living and human; it ceases to resemble a Byzantine painting, stiff and motionless in its frame of gold, with all individual expression merged in conventional colouring. "It behoved Him," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "to be made in all points like unto His brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."*

* Heb. ii. 17, 18.

BOOK SECOND.

Preparation of Jesus for His Work.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

I. BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST, YEAR OF ROME, 750.

ON the eve of a great religious event, souls are stirred by strange presentiments. It is thus that, in Judæa—bowed down and groaning under the Idumæan Herod—the hope of Messiah manifests itself everywhere with singular vitality. While the mass of the nation is given up to ardent visions of vengeance and glory, a purer faith is found in all ranks of the people, and under the most various conditions. Voices which wake echoes in all parts of the country, declare with confidence that the time of fulfilment is at hand; they are heard at Jerusalem,* under the shadow of the temple, close to those schools in which religion is nothing more than a barren science; they reverberate in Samaria, where men talk together of the prophet like unto Moses, promised in Deuteronomy.† Judging from the success of the early ministry of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ in Galilee, these expectations appear to have been very general in that province, which was called disdainfully

* See Luke ii. 25.

† John iv. 19; Deuteronomy xviii. 18.

"Galilee of the Gentiles,"* because it had been always less strictly closed against foreigners than the other parts of Palestine.† Not from this province came illustrious rabbis and men of power; it was far removed from all that agitated Jerusalem, but, for that very reason, it was more accessible to enlarged ideas. Far from offering to its inhabitants an asylum of exceptional tranquillity, this province had been the theatre of great political and religious agitation. It was on the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth, under the humble roof of poor, ignorant fishermen, that the expectation of Messiah had been preserved in greatest purity. There the voice of ancient prophets was not drowned in that of doctors of Pharisaic tradition; it retained its power in the midst of that grand serenity of nature; there the piety of mothers kindled that of sons; there grew up those who were to become, subsequently, St. Peter and St. John. The tremor of expectation was communicatd even to the pagan world, especially in the countries bordering on Judæa.‡ As the proximity of an unknown land is ascertained by breezes which have swept across it, so was there, mingling with the atmosphere of the times, a breath from the new shores, which the human soul was approaching.

To aspiration there came soon a response of positive revelation. For many centuries no new prophet had arisen; hence there was a bitter consciousness of decline in the midst of that rigid orthodoxy and faithful observance of the law, on which men so prided themselves at Jerusalem. In vain might Herod lavish, on the building of the temple, all the resources of an advanced civilisation; marble and gold could not make *that* other than an empty monument, in which the presence of God was no more revealed. "The dew of blessing falls not on us, and our fruits are tasteless," exclaimed Rabbi Simeon, the son

* Matt. iv. 15.

† Josephus speaks of the number of Greeks who dwelt there ("Vita," 12).

‡ See Matthew ii. 1.

of Gamaliel.* The heavens must needs open again to fertilise the parched ground, and to inaugurate a new era of moral fruitfulness. It was in the temple that the long silence of the voice Divine was at length broken.

Among the pious Jews of these times was a priest of the name of Zacharias, of the family of Abia, one of those four-and-twenty sacerdotal courses, instituted by David to attend to the worship of God by rotation during one week.† Living in retirement, he, with his wife Elizabeth, had kept the faith of the ancient days, and being childless, he had known the sharpest trial that could visit a believing Israelite, who looked upon each new-born infant as the possible child of promise. The holy city and the temple had preserved for him their sacred character; thus, when his turn came to officiate for the people, his prayer ascended to heaven with the incense that he burnt before the altar, and bore with it a yearning sigh for the deliverance of Israel. "Just as the muse visits only the poet, so does inspiration descend only into the heart prepared for it." This beautiful saying finds confirmation in the story of Zacharias. As he was fulfilling his office, he was honoured with a celestial vision. The angel Gabriel appeared to him on the right side of the altar; he told him that his aged wife should be no longer barren, and that this second Sarah should give to the world, a son consecrated to a glorious mission. "He shall go before the Lord God in the spirit and power of Elias, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."‡ Filled with wonder and awe, Zacharias doubts, for a moment, the

* Gfrœrer II. p. 196.

† See 1 Chron. xxiv.

‡ Luke i. 17, 18. The angel restores to its true sense the text of Malachi, which announced that Elias should be the precursor of Messiah (Mal iv. 5, 6). The people took it in a literal sense—Τί οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λέγουσιν ὅτι Ἠλίαν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον (Matt. xvii. 10). The Jerusalem Targum reproduces the same tradition. "Elias," it says, "is to be sent in the end of time to the captives of Israel." (Gfrœrer, II. p. 228). The Jew Trypho asserted that Elias would precede Messiah (Justin, "Op." p. 145).

power of God; he is struck with dumbness till the day when his tongue shall be unloosed, to magnify the blessed confusion of his passing incredulity. His stay before the altar was prolonged beyond the customary time; the people were uneasy at the delay, for an accident occurring at such a time to one of the priests would have been taken as an omen of evil. Suddenly Zacharias appears, pale with the solemn awe which takes possession of a man brought into contact with the invisible world. His enforced silence, his speechless gestures, all reveal that he has been the witness of a mysterious vision. It is not possible for us to determine its exact character; the evangelical narrative speaks only of a vision, and there is nothing to constrain us to suppose a sensible manifestation of the angel. However this may be, the revelation is not the less real, as was proved by the trembling joy of Elizabeth when she felt that she was about to be a mother.

Six months later a similar scene was enacted; not now in the capital of Judaism, in the magnificent temple, and by the altar of incense, but in the heart of Galilee, in a little city called Nazareth, which lay buried in obscurity. There a young virgin, named Mary, was living a humble life in the home of a workman; she was betrothed to one of her relatives, poor like herself, and earning his bread by the sweat of his brow; this was the carpenter Joseph. And yet this virgin was a daughter of the kings of her people; she belonged directly to the seed royal, and could fairly claim David as her ancestor. We are ignorant of the circumstances under which the most illustrious of Jewish families had sunk into this low state, and had been led to settle so far from its original home. The race of Jewish kings was so deeply fallen, that it had not even preserved accurately the proofs of its high degree, as is proved by the insoluble contradiction of the two genealogies given in our Gospels.* It is none the less certain that Mary and Joseph

* The two genealogies of Matt. (i. 1-18) and Luke (iii. 23-38) present some notable differences. Matthew only goes back to

were the true descendants of David. St. Paul, who had been so scrupulous a Pharisee, and who could not be mistaken on a point of such importance, confirms the frequently repeated assertion of the sacred narrative.* We know, besides, that there were yet living at the close of the first century, relations of Christ, who were universally admitted to belong to the family of David.† The emperor Domitian was at first uneasy at this illustrious descent, which might lend itself to ambitious or seditious views, but was reassured on seeing the horny hands of these children of a king, become simple artizans.

Poor and unknown as was the virgin of Nazareth, she was nevertheless the one "blessed among women" who was to be the mother of the Lord. It is not needful to borrow the un-

Abraham, while Luke traces the line to Adam, agreeably to his world-wide point of view. In this there is no serious difficulty. The genealogy of Matthew follows Solomon's line, and Luke that of Nathan, another son of David. But the two genealogies come into contact twice with the names of Zorobabel and Salathiel (Matt. i. 12; Luke iii. 27). The attempt has been made to obviate the difficulty by supposing a marriage by the law of Levirate. According to the Jewish law, the brother married the wife of a brother who had died without issue, and his first-born continued the line of the dead (Deut. xxv. 6). This is the solution proposed by Jul. Africanus (Eusebius, "H. E." i. 7). But we must then suppose three marriages of this sort, for the point is to explain the triple difference of the two genealogies, in the father of Salathiel, the son of Zorobabel, and, lastly, the father of Joseph, who is Jacob in Matthew, and Heli in Luke. The explanation thus becomes too complicated to be conclusive. As to the supposition that we have in Matthew the genealogy of Joseph, and in Luke that of Mary, this is incompatible with the text of Luke which claims to give the descent of Joseph (Luke iii. 23). It is better to admit that the genealogical tables of the old family royal had long been very inaccurately kept,—an added proof of the obscurity into which it had fallen.

* Ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβίδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου (2 Tim. ii. 8). *According to my Gospel*, signifies, according to the evangelical traditions collected by Paul himself.

† Ἔτι περιῆσαν οἱ ἀπὸ γένους τοῦ κυρίου υἱωνοὶ Ἰούδα, οὓς ἰδηλατόρευσαν ὡς ἐκ γένους ὄντας Δαβίδ ("Hegesippus ap. Euseb. H E." III. 20). It is, then, less absurd to admit the descent of Christ from David than would appear from the negation of it by M. Renan and the sarcasm of Strauss.

real colours of legend in order to call up before the mind that ideal type of purity, truth and artless faith, which the Gospel limner has sketched in a few outlines, so true and tender that Christian art has never been weary of reproducing it on its canvas. Mary is not a sort of divinity born of clouds. She is a true daughter of earth, and the humanity represented in her is that feeble, fallible, suffering thing we know so well, only she represents it in most touching humility and most assured faith. In this virgin heart the long-drawn aspiration of mankind—uttered as a deep plaint among the noblest of the heathen, as a glorious oracle in Hebrew prophecy—becomes the pure and perfect expression of the desire after salvation. Mary appears on the old stem of Judaism like the flower on the tree, marking the season of maturity. Let us encircle her with no other halo than that glorious hope, which flashes out in her song after the annunciation, and leave unlifted that veil of heavenly modesty in which she enwraps herself when she learns her high destiny, and of which she is never divested. Poetry has no more beautiful creation than the scene of the annunciation. Far are we from thence concluding the relation to be a myth. Why treat as chimerical all which passes the limit of vulgar prose? May we not suppose the ideal and the real meeting in the Divine plan? As Neander has said, when Jesus Christ comes into the world, it is the divine ideal becoming a human reality.

Without entering upon any dogmatic controversy, we will content ourselves with establishing that the miraculous conception of Jesus (everywhere implied in the New Testament, even where it is not formally stated), is an essential part of Christian doctrine.* He who is to be the head of a new race

* The Gospel of the childhood in Matthew and Luke suffices to establish the fundamental agreement between the synoptics and the fourth Gospel as to the divine nature of Messiah. St. Paul implies everywhere the miraculous conception; how otherwise explain Phil ii. 7, 8; Col. i. 15, 16. It is objected that Joseph is spoken of more than once in our Gospels as the father of Jesus Christ. (Luke

which is to be at once divine and human—the realisation, that is to say, of its primitive type—cannot be simply one of the links of the long chain of natural generations, all tainted with the evil which has, as it were, become incorporated in a fallen race. It is impossible that he should save humanity if he has to say with David, "I was conceived in sin." We must make, as it were, a new beginning, and the second Adam cannot destroy the work of the first, except on condition that he be not of his descent. He must be born of a woman, and assume a truly human nature; but it is equally essential that the active cause of his earthly being be not a corrupt humanity, but the divine and creative principle. When the angel Gabriel, having announced the miraculous conception to Mary with that sublime chastity, which belongs only to a pure spirit, adds these words, "Therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," he gives us the true commentary on the grand saying of John, "The Word was made flesh." As to explanations of this mystery, we can offer none, but such as is contained in the words, "With God nothing is impossible;" this will suffice for every believer in the omnipotent mercy, which is the one foundation of the supernatural.

The holy tremor of Mary, her simple and confiding acceptance of her amazing destiny, her journey to the hill country of Judæa, to mingle her joy with that of her cousin Elizabeth, the first interview in which the two mothers confide to each other their hopes—these features of Luke's narrative are fresh in

iv. 22; John i. 45; vi. 42). But this assertion is always put into the mouth of the Jews as a sign of unbelief or of contempt, and it is even so in the case of Nathaniel. It doubtless expressed the current opinion about Jesus. Luke himself removes the difficulty, when he says in his genealogy that Jesus was supposed to be the son of Joseph: ὢν, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, υἱὸς Ἰωσὴφ (Luke iii. 23). Objection is also taken to Mary's uneasiness when the child remained behind in the temple (Luke ii. 46). But this is to forget the reality of His humanity. As to the unbelief of His neighbours, it is easily explained, if we consider how much less striking is continuous moral elevation than that which is sudden and exceptional.

every memory. The song of the virgin, as indeed all the utterances of the same nature preserved in the Gospels, retains the character of the poetry of the Old Testament: we find in it both the form and spirit of the old sacred lyric. Hebrew prophecy, in its last manifestation, is like Elizabeth, who feels the babe leap in her bosom, so soon as she sees the mother of the Lord. The future about to be revealed quivers, as it were, beneath the tissue of pregnant symbols, like a bud ready to burst. Mary's whole nature flows out in the "Magnificat," full of fervent gratitude and deep humility.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name;
And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation.
He hath showed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts;
He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree:
He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away."

These words are like a foreshadowing of the first of the beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Nothing can better show that we have reached the point of contact between God and man, than the fact that the last utterance of the old covenant is the opening word of the Gospel.

None of all the great prophets has expressed a firmer hope of Messiah than this daughter of Abraham, recalling, on the eve of its actual accomplishment, the first of the promises made to the father of her people.

"He hath holpen his servant Israel,
In remembrance of his mercy,
As he spake to our fathers,
To Abraham and his seed for ever."

Hardly had the virgin returned to her native town, when Elizabeth brought into the world the child so long waited for,

who was to be John the Baptist. Zacharias recovered his speech; the breath of inspiration touched the lips which had been mute for so many months. As if the better to mark the religious significance of this birth, the father is merged in the prophet. He regards it, first of all, as the precursive sign of the great event which was about to be accomplished for the salvation of the world. His horizon is not wider than that of his contemporaries; he rejoices in the thought that Israel shall be "delivered from the hand of her enemies;"* but this deliverance will be a work of mercy; its result will be the re-establishment of holiness and righteousness, "and the remission of sins."† It is only after having thus first spoken of Messiah, that Zacharias describes in these beautiful words the mission of his son:—"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."‡ This prophetic psalm winds up with an image of truest poetry. The coming salvation is represented as "the dayspring from on high,"—the celestial morning which is to break upon the darkness of the world.

Mary was the betrothed of Joseph: the form of the latter is but faintly outlined in the Gospel history. Nothing is less like the methods of fable, than the account of his scruples when he learns the condition of his future wife. Apprised in a dream of the mystery which he had taken for her shame, he does not hesitate to marry Mary, for he knows that the child she bears shall "save his people from their sins." He was awaiting the event when an unforeseen circumstance led him to the little town of Bethlehem, whence originally he came.

King Herod was reaching the term of his long career, in which his successes were numbered by his crimes. The old despot owed his throne only to the favour of Augustus; thus he showed himself as servile towards Rome as he was implacable to the Jews; it was not likely, at a moment when his failing powers warned him that he must make his last stroke of policy, by

* Luke i. 71. † ch. i. 74, 75. ‡ ch. i, 76, 77.

assuring his power to his children, that he would refuse to lend himself to any desire or whim of his all-powerful protector. Now Augustus had begun just at this time to take a census of his empire; he wished to obtain an exact statement of the resources of each province, according to positive evidence; he included in this enrolment the allied kingdoms, which were in reality dependent on his authority; only, according to the ancient and wise policy of Rome, he permitted a compliance in form with the usages of the country. Nothing then need prevent our supposing a first census in Judæa, made conformably to the Jewish customs, which took account rather of a man's birthplace than of his residence. Herod was not the man to refuse Augustus a satisfaction so unimportant as this, or to assert the independence of Judæa; it is well known how ready he ever was to sacrifice such considerations, when his own interests were concerned. This first census preceded the more general one which took place some years later under Cyrenius, who was the governor, after Syria had been reduced to a Roman province.* It was thus a political measure,

* We quote the much controverted text of Luke, according to to the "Codex Sinaiticus:"—*αὕτη ἀπογραφὴ ἐγένετο πρώτη ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου.* It is impossible not to observe the place occupied by the word *πρώτη* in the oldest of the manuscripts. It is not, as in subsequent texts, separated from the genitive *ἡγεμονεύοντος*, but immediately precedes it; it is then very probable that, notwithstanding the exceptional hardness of the phrase, it governs the words which follow it, so that we may strictly translate thus:—"This census took place *before Cyrenius* was governor of Syria." Without enumerating the various examples of similar phraseology which may be found in Greek literature (See Tholuck "Glaubwürdigkeit," p. 181), we will confine ourselves to recalling the words of John the Baptist: *πρῶτός μου ἦν*, "he was before me" (John i. 15). Evidently *πρῶτος* here governs the genitive. If this translation is admitted, it removes the great difficulty presented by any other version: for the general census presided over by Cyrenius did not take place till ten years later. I can see, on the other hand, no difficulty in supposing that Herod may have consented to meet the wishes of Augustus. It is certain that Augustus was constantly occupied with the thought of adjusting the balance of his empire, and the allied kingdoms dependent on it (Suetonius,

entirely foreign to any religious consideration, which led Joseph and Mary to the city of David. The Jewish law laid no obligation on a woman to undertake such a journey, for the writing of her name was enough; but who can wonder at the

"Octavius," c. XXVIII.) Savigny, after having shown that from the commencement of the empire there was an endeavour to introduce the census in all the provinces, admits that the mode of taking the census varied according to the customs of the countries in which it was made ("Zeitschrift für geschischltich. Rechtwissenschaft," vol. VI.) There is also a curious passage of Suidas which speaks expressly of a *first* census made throughout the empire under Augustus (Tholuck, "Glaubwürdigkeit," p. 194). Herod made the census willingly, not as a subject, but as a royal ally; that is in the form appropriate to the customs of his kingdom. Thus all objections are removed. A novel attempt at explanation has met with great success. Zumpt, in his book entitled "De Syria Romana provincia ab C. Aug., ad T. Vespas." (1854). endeavours to show that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria. Tacitus records that Quirinius crushed the nation of the *Homonadensians* in Cilicia, after his elevation to the consulate and before he had been sent out as guide to C. Cæsar in his expedition into Armenia ("Annals," III. 48). His consulate dates from the year of Rome, 742, and his expedition into Armenia about 756. He defeated the *Homonadensians*, then, in this interval; but he could only have done it as governor of Syria, for Silicia was then a dependency of that province. Now the names of the governors of Syria being known up to the year 750–51 B.C., his entry upon office is brought up to that year. It follows that he must have been for the first time governor of Syria in the year of Rome, 750, the actual date of the birth of Jesus Christ. Mommsen arrives at the same result by his reading of the medal found at Tivoli, and struck in honour of a consul, the conqueror of a valiant nation, twice governor of Syria, and who survived Augustus. Now these designations apply only to Quirinius, conqueror of the *Homonadensians*, and the only one of the legates of Syria who lived under Tiberius. Mommsen, on the same ground as Zumpt, places the first governorship of Quirinius on the verge of the year 751. This result is assuredly of great interest; the difficulty however still remains that in 750 Judæa was not a Roman province (see Mommsen's "Notes on the Monuments of Ancyra"). The entire debate has just been re-opened by the learned pamphlet of M. Henri Lutteroth, entitled "Le Récensement de Quirinius" (Paris, 1865). Rejecting the solution which we have accepted, and which is due to Herwart, the author proposes to connect Luke i. 80 with Luke ii. 1. "The child," says the Evangelist, speaking of John the Baptist, "grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert

young wife, situated like Mary, accompanying her protector? Beside, she was not ignorant of the prophecy which pointed out Bethlehem as the city of Messiah. From Nazareth to Bethlehem is about four days' journey, especially for a poor family without any vehicle at command, and treading on foot the dusty roads of Palestine. After passing the plain of Jezreel, and smiling Samaria, the hill country of Judæa, stony, and often arid, has to be traversed. Joseph and Mary travelled like poor pilgrims. Thus, on their arrival at Bethlehem they met with no eager reception, and when they knocked at the door of a humble inn, there was no room for them, as Luke tells us in his simple, touching words. Mary found only a stable for her shelter; and there, not in a cave, as says the legend, the Redeemer was born.* "Not only," says Bossuet,

till the time of his shewing to Israel." M. Lutteroth understands by this "shewing to Israel" the first participation of John the Baptist in the passover feast, which took place with young Jews at twelve years of age. The following verse (Luke ii. 1) gives us the precise date of that event, by pointing to the census under Cyrenius. Thus the edict of Augustus was published at the time when John celebrated his majority. Our principal objection to this explanation arises from the meaning which M. Lutteroth attaches to Luke ii. 6. The Evangelist, after connecting the census under Cyrenius with the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, adds, "And so it was that while they were there the days were accomplished that she should be delivered." "Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ ἐπλήσθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ τεκεῖν αὐτήν." It appears to us evident that the second fact is closely connected with the first. M. Lutteroth is obliged to dissever them entirely, for according to his theory, the birth of Jesus Christ took place twelve years before. He is compelled to supplement Luke's text thus:—"It was there they were *also* when the time came that she should be delivered." It seems to me impossible to admit that the capital event of the Gospels and of history should be thus casually mentioned, and linked as an episode to a fact so insignificant as the first participation of John the Baptist in the passover.

* M. Renan denies, without any proof, the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem ("Vie de Jésus," p. 17). Strauss does the same. There is no real contradiction in the Gospel narrative. If Matthew says nothing of Nazareth, as the habitual residence of Joseph and Mary, he does not invalidate the evidence of Luke. It is objected, that on the return from Egypt, Joseph and Mary do not think of first

"does He seek no human splendours, but to show how little He accounts of such, He places himself at the farthest extreme from them all. Hardly can he find a spot lowly enough to be His birthplace; He meets with a half-fallen stable, and into this He descends. He accepts all that men shun, all that they fear, all that they despise, all which repels their senses, in order to show how vain and imaginary are to Him all the glories of the world."* "*Si ignobilis, si inglorius, si inhonorabilis, meus erit Christus*,"† exclaims Tertullian, in the contemplation of so much glory in so much abasement.

This great event, the most momentous in the history of the world—since it divides it into its two great parts, and is the hidden pole around which gravitate all human destinies—took place as unheeded as the most obscure.‡ No one marked it,

going to Nazareth (Matt. ii 21). Nothing prevents our supposing that after the memorable events which had been accomplished at Bethlehem, their first intention may have been to settle there. Against the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, is brought forward also. John vii. 41. 42 But this passage gives the opinion of the ignorant multitude, not that of the evangelist.

* Bossuet, "First Sermon on the Nativity of Jesus Christ."

† Tertullian, "Contra Marcionem," III. 17.

‡ The date of the birth of Jesus Christ should be assigned not to the year of Rome 754, marked by the ordinary era, but to the year 750; and that for the following reasons:—First, it is clear that Jesus Christ was born before the death of Herod (Matt. ii. 1). Now, according to Josephus ("Ant.," XVII. 8, §1; "De Bell. Jud.," I. 33, §8), Herod died about the month of Nisan, 750. This may be inferred, also, from the eclipse of the moon which, according to Josephus, took place during the military insurrection which preceded his death by a few months. Now Kepler has calculated that this eclipse must have happened in the year 750 ("Le Recensement de Quirinius," par Lutteroth, p. 51). Secondly, Kepler also assigns to the year 748 the sidereal conjunction which led to the journey of the Magi. We shall recur presently to the explanation of this phenomenon. Now, according to Matthew ii. 16, we see that this ought to have occurred two years before the birth of Jesus Christ, because Herod caused to be put to death all the children of that age as contemporaries of Messiah; we are thus brought to the year 750 for the birth of Jesus. Thirdly, we shall see, further on, that the baptism of Jesus Christ took place in the year 780, according to Luke iii. 21; now He was thirty years of age at this period. The approximate expression

except the angels in heaven, and some shepherds who were keeping their flocks on one of the hills which surround Bethehem. It was at a season of the year when the softened temperature sometimes made it needless to lead the sheep into the city at evening time. It was, doubtless, one of those beautiful oriental nights when the heavens proclaim nothing but mercy. These simple men were chosen as the first to receive the good tidings of great joy, because they were waiting for it. Everything in those fields, where the young David, like themselves, had fed his flock, reminded them of the promise made to his race, and they, as well as the scribes at Jerusalem, had doubtless read the mysterious oracle, which declared that the very ground they were treading should be the cradle of Messiah. Suddenly the startled air resounds with a mysterious choir; they hear angelic voices, and Divine words proclaim in their ears—

> "Glory to God in the highest.
> Peace on earth, good will towards men."

The shepherds believed the things which were spoken; simple, artless men they were, who had not learnt in the schools

(ὥσει) only refers to months and not to years. This date again gives us 750 as the year of His birth. After the year, it has been attempted to determine the month; a very ingenious calculation has been made to fix the date of the vision of Zacharias, by searching out the time of the year when the priestly course of Abia, to which he belonged, commenced its service in the temple. Now the course of Abia, should begin its office in the month of October, if it is true, as the Talmud has it, that the order of *Jajarib* was in office on the 9th of the month Ab, the day when the second temple was destroyed. We must reckon a year and three months from October, 748, to the birth of Christ, since the annunciation took place in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. In any case, Herod died in the month of Nisan. Jesus Christ was certainly born before his death. The same result is reached in a surer way than the necessarily hypothetical calculation founded on the order of the priests' service. The presentation in the temple was before the month of Nisan, the date of Herod's death. Now it took place forty days after the birth of Jesus. This brings us precisely to the month of February, or the end of January. (See Wieseler, "Chronologische Synopt. der vier Evang.," pp. 49-150.)

at Jerusalem to admit as possible mercy only that which a Pharisee could comprehend. They deemed it not strange—and we are at one with them—that angels, man's elder brothers, dwellers in a purer region where evil had not come, should celebrate with their sweetest songs such an event as the birth of the Redeemer.

Bethlehem is built on a little hill; it is surrounded with lesser hills which seem to rise in regular gradations, and do not shut in the horizon. Beyond these graduated heights, a soft and yet striking landscape stretches away to the mountains of Moab and the steppes of the Dead Sea. The shepherds were encamped on one of those lovely meadows, planted with olive and fig trees, which may still be seen; from thence they set out in haste to the town, and in a steep and narrow street they found the holy child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. They know His glory, and they see His humiliation. In lowly adoration they fall at His feet. These poor men, rich in faith and love, are the first retinue of the King of souls, as the cradle is His first throne. No honour could better become Him, nothing could better show over what kingdom He came to reign. "O! with what majesty does He appear to the spirit," exclaims Pascal. Mary looked on, adoring with trembling so much greatness in so much frailty; she made of all these memories a sacred treasure which she "kept in her heart,"* to transmit them unbroken to the Church.

II. The childhood of Jesus.

None of the observances commanded in the law was neglected for the child Jesus. Assuredly a fictitious history would not have admitted rites which might seem to deny His original purity, and which were only the signs of His complete incorporation with His people and mankind. Eight days after His birth He was circumcised, and solemnly received that name

* Luke ii. 19.

Jesus which found in Him alone its full signification. On the fortieth day, after the legal purification of the mother, Joseph and Mary brought Him into the Temple, to present the offering which redeemed from the priesthood every first-born male child of Israel.* The rich offered a lamb; the poor two turtledoves. This was the sacrifice of the family of Joseph the carpenter. But that great contrast of humbleness and glory which pervades the whole life of Christ appears again in this hour. Hardly is the child borne across the threshold of the Temple, when He is hailed by a prophetic voice. The aged Simeon declares that he is now ready to depart in peace, since on his closing eyes has shone the light which is to lighten all nations.† Inspiration bears him higher still, and he foretells at what a price this salvation of the world will be purchased. This feeble new-born child shall divide mankind, and the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed. He is set apart for many sorrows, and the soul of Mary His mother shall be pierced through with a sword.‡

The double prophecy of Simeon receives a speedy confirmation after the return of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where it would seem they then wished to fix their abode. While the best representatives of the heathen world are bringing Him their homage, the life of the child is menaced by the king who is seated on the throne of David. His earthly career opens under this ray of glory and this glare of hate.

A sidereal phenomenon, which consisted in the conjunction of three planets, with which might, perhaps, be associated the appearance of one of those passing stars, which astronomers have marked from time to time, had drawn some devotees of the religion of Zoroaster from the far East to Palestine. Clearly, the precursive sign of the Messiah must first have arisen in their hearts, or they would not have sought it in the heavens; if this great hope had not been illuminating their dim anticipations, they would not have connected it with a natural appearance, which had in itself no religious significance. We

* Levit. xii. 4-6. † Luke ii 31, 32. ‡ ch. ii. 35.

have already shown that the religion of Persia was more accessible than any other eastern superstition to the idea of a Messiah; human life was not in its creed, as in the pantheism of India, an evil dream, which man must seek to shake off as speedily as possible, either by asceticism or annihilation; it represented life as a real combat between beneficent and maleficent powers; it recognised the intervention of superior beings in our destiny, to effect our deliverance; it believed in godlike heroes, the servants or representatives of Ormuz. Parseeism had departed farther and farther from the fatalistic dualism with which it started; it had become purified by its contact with Judaism since the exile in Babylon. The dispersion of the Jews thoughout the East had augmented their influence. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that men like the Magi, belonging to the *élite* of their nation, may have had knowledge of some of the oracles of the Old Testament. Their aspirations were confirmed by what they learnt of the Messiah looked for in Judæa. In this attitude of heart and mind, a sidereal phenomenon, which we know to have actually taken place two years before the birth of Christ, came to animate their hopes. Doubtless they still shared the superstitions of the ancient East as to the influence of stars, and sought to read the future in the vault of night. But they were sincere seekers after the true God, and He would be found of them.

The sidereal appearance which led to the journey of the Magi was no miracle, else it would have aroused a universal astonishment, of which some trace would have been preserved by the historians of the time. Persian *savans* have confirmed it by their observations. There is, therefore, no reason for supposing the phenomenon to be other than the conjunction which, according to Kepler, took place about this period.*

* Kepler arrives at this result in the following manner. At the close of the year 1603 (Dec. 17th), he noted the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, completed by Mars in the following spring; in

The Magi bent their steps towards Judæa, probably from a previous acquaintance with Jewish prophecies, or from a distant echo which had reached them, to the effect that Messiah was to be born in that country. Arrived at Jerusalem, they are compelled to inquire were is the town in which He is expected. The re-appearance of the star over Bethlehem confirms the exact indications given them. Now a star could not stand over a house; its shining could not be thus concentrated on one point. But it is quite possible that, after being for a time hidden, it might re-appear at the very moment in which a fixed spot is reached. The Gospel narrative uses popular language, as when it speaks of the rising and setting of the sun, and makes no pretence to scientific exactness in the description of natural appearances. Thus the Magi were led into Judæa primarily by their holy aspirations. What manner of Child shall this be who attracts so far pilgrims from a strange and heathen land? The time is come when national barriers are about to be thrown down; more than a mere son of David is here, and a kingdom greater than that of Solomon is at hand.*

the autumn of the same year, a celestial body, till then unknown, appeared in the neighbourhood of Jupiter and Saturn, to the S.E. of Scorpio; it ceased to be visible in March, 1606. Kepler was anxious to ascertain whether a similar phenomenon might not have occurred about the time of the birth of Christ. His calculation brought him to the conclusion that such a conjunction had occurred in the year 748. He supposed that a celestial body of the nature of that which he had observed, might have appeared at the same date. Now, by a very remarkable coincidence, the chronological tables of China show that a star which was only visible for seventy days was noted in the year 748. (Wieseler, p. 64.) It is true that Jesus Christ was not born till 750, but the Gospel text shows clearly that the star must have appeared two years previously, since Herod, after having inquired exactly what time the star appeared, had all the children of that age put to death. *Ἠκρίβωσε τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος* (Matt. ii. 7).

* Strauss (p 373) does not fail to give a mythical origin to the star of the Magi, referring it to the star by which Balaam represents the coming of Messiah (Numb. xxiv. 17). But there is one great difficulty in this interpretation, namely, that what is pointed out in the oracle of Balaam is not a precursive sign of Messiah, but

The Magi having been warned in a vision that Herod is only awaiting their tidings to put the Holy Child to death, return privately to their own country: the king, in his wrath, commands the massacre of all the male children of two years old and under in the territory of Bethlehem. Such a crime has been considered improbable, and the silence of Josephus has been urged against it, as if the murder of a handful of children in a little town might not be lost, in the midst of all the atrocities which stained especially the latter years of the life of Herod. Assuredly, he who had immolated a cherished wife, a brother, and three sons to his jealous suspicions, and who ordered a general massacre for the day of his funeral, so that his body should not be borne to the earth in the midst of universal rejoicing,—such a monster would not recoil from a measure so insignificant in his eyes, when the object was to prevent a dangerous explosion of religious fanaticism. What recks he of the weeping of mothers? A little earth soon stifles that; but it goes up—a terrible cry—to heaven, "In Rama was there a voice heard" says the Evangelist, quoting from Jeremiah: "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not."* This pathetic personification of the unhappy city is better understood when one sees at its gates the tomb of the wife of Jacob: the name of Rachel was thus closely linked with Bethlehem.†

Messiah Himself. This does away with all analogy between the text brought forward and that of Matthew.

* Matt. ii. 18.

† We find in the literature of the Talmud a significant confirmation of the historical character of the Gospel of the childhood. in fact we find the rabbis borrowing from the first chapter of Matthew and Luke their most characteristic traits to apply to the future Messiah, which they would not have done if the evangelical tradition had not acquired a great ascendency. In this respect the following passage from the *Sohar* is significant: *Revelabitur Messias in terra Galilæa, et stella quædam in plagâ orientali existens, absorbebit septem stellas, quando revelabitur Messias.* We read elsewhere: *Orietur e plaga orientali stella quædam.* (Gfrœrer II. 358). A proof that this allusion to the star which was to precede

Joseph and Mary had fled into Egypt, in consequence of a dream in which they had been warned of God of the peril that threatened their child. They remained there only a short time, for Herod died a few weeks after their flight, in the spring of the year of Rome 750. Joseph, on his return, left Bethlehem for ever; he feared that the direct heir of Herod might show the same animus as his father. He settled in Galilee, in the town of Nazareth, which had been his abode before the great events of that memorable year had made him desirous of dwelling in the city of David.* Apocryphal literature has evinced a great predilection for this period of the history of Jesus, just because it has been left in the shade by the Gospel.† We shall imitate the sacred reserve. It is

Messiah goes back to a date much more ancient than the book of *Sohar* is, that the famous agitator Bar Cocheba, who led the rebellion of the Jews under Trajan, was called the *Son of the Star*. Rabbinical literature has also preserved, in its manner, the trace of the massacre of the children at Bethlehem. It makes Pharaoh issue a decree answering exactly to that of Herod, with reference to the Israelitish children of the time of Moses. Now Moses was more and more regarded as the type of Messiah. We will confine ourselves to quoting the following passage: *Dixerunt magi ad Pharaonem; Nactus est puer qui educet Israelitas ex Ægypto. Tunc cogitavit Pharao in corde suo, et dixit ut abjicerent omnes natos masculos in fluvium.* (Gfrœrer II. 354). Evidently there is here a modification of the original history, based on the story of Matthew, for the prevision of the part of Moses as the deliverer of Israel is a feature foreign to Exodus, and borrowed from the Gospel. It is certain that at the close of the first century the fourth book of Esdras shows a marked tendency to assign to Messiah a supernatural origin, which reminds us of the first chapters of Matthew and Luke.

* Whatever Schleiermacher may say ("Leben Jesu," p. 75) the narratives of Matthew and of Luke can harmonise, for there is no impossibility in supposing that the presentation in the temple took place before the adoration of the Magi and the flight into Egypt.

† The quotation made by Matthew from Hosea xi. 1. "I have called *my Son* out of Egypt" (ch. ii. 15, 16), applying it to the return of the child Jesus into Judæa, is an example of the freedom with which he searches the Old Testament to find everywhere types and predictions of Messiah; for it is certain that the prophet had only reference, in that text, to a past event—the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt—and not to a future event relating to Christ.

certain that the childhood of Christ forms no exception to the law of slow and gradual progress. "The child," says Luke, "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him"* Thus did Jesus pass through the obscure period in which thought and consciousness are yet dormant; on the knees of His mother He learned to speak, and the divine treasures hidden within were not at once disclosed. Evil alone had no growth within Him; nothing tarnished the exquisite purity of His soul. He never for an instant ceased to be one with His Father; His heart opened as spontaneously to the life divine, as His lungs breathed the vital air. Then as He grew, and intelligence opened, He became more and more conscious of the peculiar relation which united Him to God. Externally, nothing seems to have distinguished Him from other children, at least in the eyes of those who did not, like Mary, lift the veil of humility which concealed His inner life. If it had been otherwise, it would be impossible to explain the persistent unbelief of His kinsfolk and neighbours. He did not assume the prophetic, nor ever assert a precocious independence. As a child, He perfectly fulfilled the duties of His age, which may be summed up in submission to the heads of the family. "Thus," says Irenæus, 'He sanctified childhood by passing through it."

There is every reason to suppose that He grew up in the workshop of Joseph, and laboured with His own hands. If He attended the elementary schools in which the young Jews were initiated into holy studies, He kept aloof from those of the rabbis; to frequent these He must have quitted Nazareth; and what would they have taught Him? What had He to do with that scholasticism, the elaborate framework of which He was to destroy with a breath? His teaching shows how deeply He was versed in the sacred literature of His people; there

We find a still more striking instance of this method of quotation in Matt. ii. 23. It is impossible to find in the Old Testament a text in which the word *Nazarene* is applied to Messiah.

* Luke ii. 40.

He found, as it were, His spiritual patrimony; the divine words were the food of His soul, and reached to its very depths. The soft and lovely scenes of nature which surrounded Him were also a holy book, in which He read the name of His Father; He grasped in all its depth the harmony which exists between the revelations of earth and heaven. Nazareth is one of the sweetest sites in Palestine. St. Jerome rightly calls it the flower of Galilee, and compares it to a rose opening its corolla. It does not command a landscape like Bethlehem; the girdle of hills which encloses it makes it a calm retreat, the silence of which is, still in our day, broken by the hammer and chisel of the artisan. The child Jesus grew up in the midst of a thoroughly simple life, in which a soul like His might best develop its harmonies. He had only to climb the surrounding heights to contemplate one of the finest landscapes of the Holy Land. At His feet lay the plain of Jezreel, tapestried with myriad flowers, each one more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory. Its boundaries were Tabor and Carmel, whence echoed the voice of Elijah; Lebanon confronted Carmel, and the chain of Hermon, joined its snowy summits to the mountains of Moab, while afar off glimmered the Great Sea, which, outlying all national barriers, seemed to open to Jesus that world which He came to save. Living in communion with nature, He learned to know her well. From her He gathered those expressive illustrations, which He afterwards scattered broadcast over His discourses, and which make His parables such fresh and living pictures.

Just as the plant does not open to the sun, till it has cast its roots into the soil to a depth not measured by the eye, so Jesus, by secret and intense prayer, drew the sap and life of His soul from the very bosom of God. Some favouring circumstance was all that was needed to strike from Him, before the eyes of all, the spark divine. This was afforded by the journey to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast, at the age when the young Jews began to take part publicly in the

religious life of their people. This solemn visit to the Temple filled the soul of Jesus with emotion not to be described; under the symbols, He beheld the divine realities. He felt himself truly in the house of God, and perhaps, for the first time, became fully conscious of the greatness of His mission: He comprehended that He would be called to fulfil those solemn types. When His mother, grieved at His tarrying behind, addressed Him in words of tender reproach, He gave that deep and mysterious reply, "How was it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"* His precocious wisdom had been already revealed in an interview with the doctors of the Temple; His questions showed such riches of thought and feeling, that the illustrious masters were themselves confounded. The questions of a child are often more embarrassing, by their artless depth, than the arguments of the most consummate dialectician. They go straight to the truth by the royal road of simplicity. There was not a white-headed rabbi in the schools of the law, who could meet the questions of this child of Nazareth. This scene in the Temple was of great moment in the development of Jesus, by revealing Him to Himself. The next eighteen years He passed in the most complete obscurity. We may not seek to penetrate their mystery; it is enough for us to know that they prepared Him in solitude for His great mission.† He spent them in prayer and a holy life.‡

* Luke ii. 49.

† M. Keim has devoted some noble pages to the development of Jesus during this period, in his pamphlet, entitled "Der Geschichtliche Christus. Erste Rede." He dwells eloquently on the influence which must have been exerted upon Him by the reading of the prophets and by the scenes of nature. We are not prepared to suppose with him, that the Pharisees taught Jesus the idea of the kingdom of God founded on righteousness. This idea is the very soul of the Old Testament. The sect of the Pharisees showed Him what were the elements of false devotion and of the spurious religion which destroys souls.

‡ The question whether Jesus had any brothers has no religious interest after the decisive text Matt. i. 25 (*οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως*),

proves, that after the birth of Christ, Mary might yet be a
:r. Πρωτότοκος cannot be translated *only son* without doing
ce to the language. I admit that the word *brother* may
imes signify *cousin*, but it is none the less surprising that the
r expression ἀνέψιος is not once employed in the Gospels, and
he *brethren of the Lord* are always in the company of Mary.
stress is laid on the fact that Jesus leaves his mother to the
f John, but John was nearer to Him in heart than any of His
d (John vii. 5), and he would be to Mary the best of sons.
aid again that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a sister of the
name, married to Cleophas, and that she had two sons called
; and Joses. It is attempted to identify the former with the
; who is constantly spoken of in the New Testament as the
r of the Lord. On this supposition we should have only two
es, both of them apostles; first, the son of Zebedee, brother to
who was put to death by Herod; second, the son of Cleophas
phæus. (Cleophas and Alphæus may be regarded as two
of the same Hebrew name.) If this latter was the same as
, the brother of the Lord, we should have the proof that, in
se, *brother* is the equivalent of *cousin*. But this hypothesis
efore the texts which clearly distinguish the brothers of the
from the apostles. We quote (Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5); and
et by Gal. i. 19. (*"Other of the apostles saw I none, save
the Lord's brother."*) But in this passage the expression
es should be understood in a wide and not in the strict sense.
lieve then, in fine, that there was one James, son of Alphæus
ophas, and an apostle like his brother Joses, but distinct from
the brother of the Lord. The resemblance of the names is
ore surprising in the case of the two Jameses than of the two
.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN THE BAPTIST. BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST.*

I. Preparation and first Preachings of the Forerunner.

THE day was approaching when Jesus would emerge from the obscure retirement, in which he had spent His childhood and youth.

It was then there arose from the desert the voice of the great prophet, whose mission was to go before and prepare His way. John the Baptist was like those couriers who, according to oriental custom, run before the sovereign to remove every obstacle out of the royal road. As, however, the royal road for Christ was that of sacrifice and of sorrow, it was fit that the precursor of the Crucified should be a martyr for righteousness. No character among the prophets and apostles is more beautiful than that of the Baptist. Ardent and austere, deriving his force from his absolute disinterestedness, humble as he was great, he is not merely a prophet, he is ancient prophecy personified in the last of its representatives, and appearing on the threshold of the gospel history, to own and hail the Messiah of whom and in all ages it had spoken. As Jesus Himself said, "Among the sons of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." And yet he is but the son of a woman, his greatness is not unmixed with weakness, he has his failings. This mighty voice of the desert has accents altogether human, which reveal a heart subject to

* I have thought it would be more interesting to present in one chapter all that relates to John the Baptist.

the same fluctuations as our own. We have not here the fictitious type of man, but a true and living character sketched in a few outlines. The name of Elias, given to John the Baptist, was not due only to the influence of the popular superstitions of which we have spoken; it was the expression of a true conviction. Everything in him recalled the great prophet of action. Elijah did not write a single page in the Book of God; his book was himself, his prophecy was his life: it was enough for him to appear, to set before degenerate Israel the living image of holiness. Such was John the Baptist from the commencement of his career. That which he spoke, he lived; this preacher of repentance was himself a penitent, who had been the first to bend beneath the weight of divine justice, and who trembled under it still. He might indeed be called the power of God, but it was power in an earthen vessel. The prison of Machærus was to him that which Horeb was to Elijah, when he lay down beneath the juniper tree, overwhelmed by the burden of his terrible and glorious mission. Nothing is so touching as the tears and agony of the strong and brave. John the Baptist was the man of a transition period; the son of the old covenant, he beholds the new, but does not enter into it. Like Moses, he dies on the border of the land of promise. He sows in tears, and hears not the joyous song of the reapers. Such a mission costs much to those who are charged with it; and the perpetual contradictions and torturing doubts of which they are conscious, form no small part of their peculiar trials.

The circumstances of the birth and childhood of John the Baptist are familiar to us. Marked from his birth with the sign of a divine consecration, he was educated in all that was noble and true by his father Zacharias and his mother Elizabeth. His eyes opened to the first rays of that rising sun which had been already hailed by the pious priest. Doubtless the memorable events which had heralded his birth were told him from his tenderest years; but not being elucidated then, as to us

they are, by the whole Gospel history, they would appear somewhat obscure to him, so much the more as we can hardly suppose Elizabeth and Zacharias to have possessed the same depth of religious intuition, in the habitual course of their life, as they had reached in the moment of inspiration. Again, great realities appear more or less indistinct when they are only beheld from a distance. The communications between Mary and Elizabeth were doubtless rare, on account of the distance between Nazareth and the hill country of Judæa. It appears probable that the parents of John the Baptist had been long dead before he entered on his active ministry, as no mention is made of them from that time. It is not then surprising that the august memories of his infancy should have been wanting in definiteness to the young prophet; nor is there anything to prove that he had any personal acquaintance with Jesus during this period. He knew only with certainty, that the times of Messiah were at hand, and that he himself, at the first signal from God, would be called to play an important part in this great religious crisis. Such a consciousness could not fail to give a singular fervency to his spirit.

His consecration to God was to take a less positive and less official form than the priesthood, to which his birth designed him. It was not priests or doctors that were wanting; the very spirit of Judaism was stifled under rites and traditions. It was this spirit which had to be reanimated and freed from all that oppressed it. Now for this work there was needed the free and mighty breath of prophecy. Everything was exceptional in a vocation so grand as that of a Forerunner. From his childhood he was a Nazarene, bound, that is, by a special vow to abstain from all fermented liquors, and to let no razor come upon his head: this was among the Jews a manner of marking peculiar consecration to God.*

Nor was this all. We find, from the fragments preserved of John's preaching, that he was overwhelmed with grief, in view

* See Numbers vi. 1-21.

of the miseries and sins of his nation. Paying no regard to appearances, he discerned in all ranks, and not least beneath the austerity of the Pharisee, the tokens of impenitence and impiety. Therefore he so ardently craved for a general purification and a moral renovation; he could not rest in the now empty solemnities of a religion, which had become vain and degenerate, and it was not possible for him to acquiesce patiently in the ignoble routine of life led by his contemporaries.

This conflict of his great soul drove him into the wilderness. Nothing can be more false than to represent him as an oriental ascetic, or disciple of the Essenes.* He was an utter stranger to that Indian theosophy which places the principle of evil in the body and not in the soul, and which seeks salvation in asceticism. John the Baptist was a preacher of repentance; sin was, in his eyes, essentially a moral deviation, and not a fatality of the physical nature. He hated evil with such an intense hatred only because he saw in it a free act: so far from pretending to urge man to self-annihilation as the secret of his own salvation, he never ceased to invoke and proclaim the true deliverer. Nor did he found in the desert a sort of monastic order, like the Essenes, or like that Banès of whom the historian Josephus was for a time a disciple, and who desired his followers to be clothed like himself in the leaves of trees, to eat only herbs, and drink only water.† John the Baptist sought in solitude a haven for prayer, under the secret eye of God for his momentous mission. His austerity was no rule, no imposed observance, it was the very expression of his deep spiritual life. He wrapt himself in a rough mantle of camel's hair, and fed on locusts and wild honey, only because the great thought which absorbed him left no place for minor considerations.

* This is the opinion maintained by M. Renan, "Vie de Jésus," pp. 75-77.

† Josephus, "Vita" II.

The desert of Judæa, for which John the Baptist exchanged the smiling vineyards of Hebron, amidst which his childhood was passed, reaches to the Dead Sea. There it assumes an aspect of desolate grandeur. Every trace of earthly life vanishes; one could fancy oneself beyond the world of man. The accursed lake spreads its heavy and motionless waters between rugged downs, and the severe line of the mountains of Moab. The justice of God seems alone to speak in all this gloomy region. What a school for such a man as John the Baptist!

It was there, in presence of the terrible majesty of that blasted land, that he heard the words of prophets and holy men, not from the freezing voice of a scribe, but directly as if they sounded for him alone. As soon as he speaks, we are conscious that he has grasped their inner meaning, and has been nourished on the very marrow of the Scripture. The Old Testament lives again in him. The two great utterances which he brings from the desert, contain the two capital revelations, to which all the preparation for the Gospel has been tending. Law and prophecy, denunciation of sin and promise of pardon, the flame which consumes and the light which consoles—is not this the whole of the covenant? "Repent ye, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Such was the two-fold message of John the Baptist. On his inspired lips the law had all its terrors, and the promise all its glorious assurance. He had read in the desert, as none had yet done in Israel, that book at once bitter and sweet, which is the very book of God. Doubtless he still imaged the future to himself in the colours of the past; his spirit had not broken the theocratic mould; but nothing was more foreign to his heart than the dreams of political agitation, which so often stirred his countrymen to revolt. He looked for a revolution in the conscience, for the yoke which weighed him down was not that of Rome, but of sin. The deliverance, in his eyes, must be of the nature of the bondage, and assume a moral character. He

might have attained a much wider popularity if he had used his fervent words in the service of the passions of his countrymen, for these had been wrought up to the last degree, since the definite annexation of Judæa to Syria, which involved the loss of the last shadow of independence till then retained. But the prophet's mission never was to follow the tide of the multitude, but to stem it. When the time comes for John the Baptist to attack the powers that be, he will do it in the name of the God whom they outrage; he will use no other weapon but his word. Thus material force will have no power over his testimony, which will stand for ever, like all that belongs to the higher order of spirit.

It is probable that John's reputation had spread even before he came forth from the desert; the people, eager for novelties, had gone thither seeking him.* At length the moment came for him to quit his retirement. Doubtless he had received direct revelations as to the near appearance of Messiah. He himself alludes to such, when he says that God had sent him to baptize.† His commission then was directly given from heaven. The rite of baptism is the summary of his preaching and of his whole ministry, at least when it is restored to its true meaning, and is not regarded according to the thoroughly Pharisaic interpretation of the historian Josephus, as setting forth the self-purification of the soul.‡ The originality of John's baptism is unjustly disputed, on the ground that it was identical with the baptism of proselytes. It is first very doubtful whether this ceremony was in use at this period; then John expressly combated the exaggerated idea entertained of the privilege of belonging to the holy nation. The rite which he instituted connects itself with the ablutions so much observed in the religion of Moses, but it extends their significance, by

* Κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας (Matt. iii. 1).

† Ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν (John i. 33).

‡ Ἐφ' ἁγνείᾳ τοῦ σώματος ἅτε δὴ καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς δικαιοσύνῃ (Josephus, "Ant." XVIII., § 1).

substituting the idea of moral purification, for that which is merely ritual. With him the question is not of such or such a special defilement, but of that general corruption which has befallen human nature, and which calls for a powerful and new manifestation of Divine love. Thus his baptism represents present repentance and coming deliverance; it is the true sacrament of this era of preparation, the condensed utterance of which is a cry of grief and hope, taking the form of a prayer of penitence and trust. The later prophets had declared that the times of Messiah would be marked by the purification of hearts. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," we read in Ezekiel.* "There shall be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," says Zechariah.† Evidently the baptism of John only translated into an impressive ceremonial these symbolical words. If for ablutions he has substituted immersion, it is the better to represent the gravity of the disease which was to be healed. His baptism is closely connected by him with the coming of Messiah; it is the symbol of hope no less than of repentanee; it derives its value precisely from the approaching inauguration of the era of salvation. John the Baptist never himself claims to introduce this era, he only prepares it; his baptism is in the name of Him who is to come.

The effect was immense in Judæa when the young prophet came forth from his desert, already attended by a numerous band of hearers. What a contrast was there between him and the doctors of Jerusalem, puffed up with their virtues and knowledge, wearing ostentatiously their long robes and broad phylacteries! Habited like the simplest shepherd of the mountains, with a girdle of rope round his loins, the Baptist tramples under foot all the idle prejudices, all the evil passions, all the vices of his nation. He carries truly in his hand that axe which he says is about to be laid at the root of every corrupt tree; for his unsparing speech strikes at the very

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25. † Zech. xiii. 1.

foundation of evil. His preaching is perfectly adapted to the moral condition of his age. To the formalists, who imagine they can discharge by ceremonies their debt to heaven, he proclaims the judgments of a God who hates their vain solemnities. "Who hath taught you," he exclaims, "to flee from the wrath to come?"* The national pride is carried to the verge of idolatry. The Jews are intoxicated with the thought of counting their genealogy from patriarchs and prophets, and declare with Jesus Sirach—"This glorious heritage shall continue to our posterity; our sons shall endure for ever, and their glory shall never be removed. Abraham is become the father of a great multitude; no glory is equal to his, and he has perpetuated the divine covenant to his race."† It is to these proud and unworthy inheritors of the great past that the Forerunner dares to address such words as these—"Say not ye, we have Abraham to our father, for I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."‡ John has a searching word for every class of his hearers. To the publicans he preaches scrupulous fidelity in their calling; the soldiers he enjoins to avoid deceit and violence, and to be content with their wages. If the great ones of the earth once mingle in the rough crowd which usually surrounds him; if he sees Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him to espy him, he has but one word for them—"O generation of vipers!" Thus does he purchase their complaisance or their toleration. To all, he repeats emphatically the call—"Repent ye, the time is fulfilled."§ But he knows the human heart too well to trust even to the rite which he has instituted; it is not enough to be plunged in the stream and to give tokens of a sincere sorrow. Repentance, like sacrifice, may be a vain ceremony. It is worth only what it costs. "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance," he cries: "he that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat let him

* Matt. iii. 7.
† "Jesus Sirach," XLIV.
‡ Matt. iii. 9.
§ See Luke iii. 1–17.

do likewise." There is nothing in these words, whatever may be said of them, marking the excited demagogue.* Charity and justice may be preached without the charge of communism.

These scenes were enacted in the country which lies between the desolations of the Dead Sea and the oasis of Jericho, on those low shores between which the Jordan pours its turbid waters. John appears to have abode by preference in a small spot on the eastern shore, called Bethany, the same name as the village near Jerusalem.† But he frequently crossed from one side to the other, for, according to St. Luke, his ministry was exercised throughout "all the country about Jordan." It was but a few hours' journey from the holy city to the river. Jericho was a flourishing town, situated in a smiling and very populous valley bordering on Galilee. The year in which the Baptist left the desert was a sabbatical year—a time of universal rest, when a pause was made in all the occupations of common life. This accounts for the extraordinary concourse of men of all ranks gathered round the Forerunner.

A large number of his hearers, impressed by his discourses, and also by the stern sublimity of the man, were baptized, confessing their sins. Since the days of Ezra nothing had been seen like it. The movement was general. Many, no doubt, were the subjects only of a passing impression; but others, among whom were some young Galileans, attached themselves to the person of John the Baptist, and avowed themselves his disciples. They aided him in his ministry and baptized the multitudes with him. The Forerunner instructed them and moulded their religious life; he appears even to have taught

* Renan "Vie de Jésus," p. 104.

† John i. 28. Origen has substituted Bethabara for Bethany. ("Comment. in Johan." VI. 24) But all the manuscripts, and among the rest the "Sinaiticus," have Bethany. There is no difficulty in supposing two small places of the same name in Judæa.

them a form of prayer.* The shores of the stream resounded with the groans of the penitent. One might have deemed that a new Israel was about to rise from those sacred floods, already the witness of so many miracles. There could be no doubt that this was indeed a prophet who had come forth from the desert; this was truly a voice from heaven come to break in upon the vain doctrines and traditions of the schools. Might not this strange and mighty man be He who should come, or at least might not this be Elijah, come down from his chariot of fire to herald in Messiah?

These rumours spread among the people with growing rapidity. The Baptist, as soon as he heard them, disavowed them utterly. "There cometh one after me," he cried, "mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; I, indeed, baptize you with water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. My baptism is only a sign of purification; He will bring you the true purification with the Divine Spirit, of which He will be the dispenser. As says the prophet Joel, He shall be the fire that lightens, vivifies, and purifies while it consumes. Lord of the harvest, He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His garner. He is the master; I am but the servant."† The Sanhedrim, so much the more jealous of its authority, because it was obliged to confine itself strictly within the sphere of religion, was stirred by the influence acquired by John the Baptist. It therefore sent a deputation to him to make enquiry into his pretensions. They put to him the same questions as the people—"Who art thou then; the Christ or Elias?" The reply was yet more definite. Pressed by his interlocutors, after his earnest assertion that he is neither Messiah nor Elias, he thus defines his mission:—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord." He is then only a voice, a witness. "He is not the light, but is come to bear witness of the light." But he

* See Luke xi. 1. † Paraphrase of Luke iii. 16-18.

precedes very closely the great Unknown, who is to fulfil the purpose of God. "There standeth One among you whom ye know not. He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, for He was before me."* Thus the revelation of Messiah, which John had received in the desert, had shed for him a ray of illumination upon the mystery of Messiah's external existence. By the same supernatural teaching, he knew that he should soon behold Him with his own eyes, and should recognise him by a miraculous sign.†

II. Baptism of Jesus Christ. Year of Rome 780.‡

As John the Baptist was fulfilling his accustomed office, Jesus himself appeared before him. It was the first step of His

* Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον, ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν (John i. 15.)

† The reality of the revelation appears from the following words:—Ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν· Ἐφ' ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς (John i 33.)

‡ The date of Jesus Christ's baptism may be determined by that of the first Passover which follows that event (John ii. 13). We read indeed (John ii. 20) "Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building." The date then of this Passover is the forty-sixth year from the commencement of the re-building of the Temple under Herod. Now, according to Josephus ("Ant." XV. 11) this re-building was commenced in the eighteenth year of the reign of Herod the Great, which began in the year 717, the time of the death of Antigonus; we are then brought to the year of Rome 734. The Passover celebrated forty-six years later, was therefore in the year 781-782. The events which intervened between the baptism of Jesus and his journey to Jerusalem, place the baptism in the preceding year, that is the year 780, which gives us thirty as the age of Jesus, conformably with Luke iii. 23. The date marked so precisely in Luke iii. 1, is not in contradiction with that given by John, if it is regarded, as Wieseler regards it, as indicating not the commencement of John the Baptist's preaching, but his last appearance on the eve of his imprisonment, which coincides with Christ's entrance upon His ministry. The fifteenth year of Tiberius is the year 781-782, for Augustus died in August, 767. If, therefore, Luke iii. 1 referred to the baptism of Jesus Christ, we could not make the dates agree. It is otherwise if Wieseler's hypothesis is admitted. The following are the grounds on which he supports it:—First. There are notable differences between

public life. He had not hitherto crossed the threshold of His dwelling at Nazareth; no disciples accompanied Him;* for none among His countrymen had discerned the Master and prophet in the obscure Galilean peasant. It appears evident from the narrative in the Gospels that John had not met Him for long years. He might easily have forgotten the features of His countenance, even if He still preserved a vague recollection of the events of His childhood. Yet, when Jesus approached the shores of the river, John, by a divine intuition, recognised on His brow the seal of spotless purity; all that he had heard from his infancy came back to his memory, and measuring at a glance the distance which separated this new comer from his ordinary proselytes, he exclaimed—"I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," was the reply of Jesus. Scarcely is He plunged in the waters of the stream

Luke iii. 1 and the texts of the synoptics which refer to the baptism (Matt. iii. 1; Mark i. 9-11). Second. The account in Luke terminates with the incarceration of John the Baptist (iii. 19). Third. Luke, in the Acts, shows clearly that according to him, this incarceration immediately preceded the opening of the public ministry of Jesus Christ (Acts i. 22). In Acts xiii. 25, the words of the Baptist, given in Luke iii. 16, are evidently referred to the last days of the preaching of the Forerunner ("as John fulfilled his course.") This reference appears to us decisive. It has been attempted, in support of the contrary hypothesis, to make the reign of Tiberius date from the time when he was associated in the empire, in the year 765. But this calculation is quite contrary to ancient usage. Strauss accuses the Evangelist Luke of inaccuracy, for having made Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Josephus states that a tetrarch of the same name was put to death in the year 718, by order of Cleopatra, who had taken possession of his territory (Josephus, "Ant." XV., 4, 1). But Dio Cassius (49, 32) tells us that Antony did not give to Cleopatra all the territory that belonged to the first Lysanias; that which was left might perfectly well revert to one of his heirs. A medal confirming Luke's text has been found ("Wieseler," p. 153).

* It is a pure imagination of M. Renan to represent Jesus as having for a time united his school with that of John the Baptist ("Vie de Jésus." p. 65). He was as yet absolutely alone, according to all the Gospel narratives.

when a glorious vision completes the illumination of the Baptist. He sees the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus, in the form of a dove, the gentle image of an abiding inspiration, and a voice which is not of our world speaks the word, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." * Then the Baptist exclaims in an ecstasy—"I knew him not." It is, indeed, now, that for the first time he knows Jesus in His glory as the only begotten Son and the Messiah.†

The baptism of Jesus marks a great epoch in His life. It cannot be justly brought forward as arguing anything against His perfect holiness. It is evident from the Gospel narrative, that this ceremony assumed in His case an exceptional character. John shows clearly by his hesitation that he knows he is baptizing a perfectly holy being. Why, then, did Jesus submit to be baptized? The Baptist himself answers the question by this significant saying, "That he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with

* According to John, the most direct witness of the scene at the Jordan, the vision was given to the Baptist alone (John i. 32-33). Matthew and Mark say expressly that it was he who saw the dove (Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10). If they give a direct form to the divine words, *Thou art my beloved son*, there is nothing to prevent our supposing that the Forerunner alone heard it in that form. The manner in which the sacred record is expressed shows abundantly that it is not a real dove which is intended (ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν Matt. iii. 16; σωματικῷ εἴδει, ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν Luke iii. 22). There is here then only a vision, but this vision is a real revelation which has its immediate effect, corresponding with which is an actual communication of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ. This is the divine fact of which the vision is only the symbolical expression. John the Baptist, in the fourth Gospel, makes no distinction between the mode of the revelation which he received at the Jordan, and that which had prepared him for it (John i., 32-33). Another proof in favour of our assertion.

† It seems to us that this narrative-commentary of the evangelical story answers the objection brought forward by Strauss in his two "Lives of Christ" (work quoted previously), and by Schleiermacher ("Leben Jesu," p. 146). There is then no contradiction between the Gospel of the childhood and the account of the baptism.

water."* Thus the baptism of Christ was first of all designed solemnly to inaugurate His ministry. It was on this account it was attended with the remarkable circumstances, which mark its importance. To see in it only that in which it resembles an ordinary baptism, and to pass by those points in which it differs, is to ignore its distinctive features, and to be untrue to historical facts. John, the representative of the old covenant, is commissioned to proclaim in the name of the prophets and holy men whose legitimate successor he is, that the new covenant has begun and the promised Messiah is come. But this kingdom of heaven, which is about to be set up on the earth, will have for its subjects humble and sorrowful souls and contrite hearts. The baptism of repentance is the affecting symbol of this whole dispensation. Is it not fit that the King of a repentant people should Himself prepare their way? Is He not identified with the race that He comes to represent? He who is to die for it, may He not for it repent, and bear on His heart the burden of its moral miseries? In the Mosaic institutions, defilement was not confined to the defiled person; contact with such an one rendered purification necessary. Here we have not simple contact with a fallen race; there is the most absolute union with it. This mystery is the very basis of redemption, and it is not more difficult to admit it on the banks of Jordan, than in the garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross.

It would be erroneous to suppose that Jesus received no grace at His baptism. He had submitted Himself wholly to the conditions of humanity. He drew from the springs of the divine life, as we ourselves need to draw from them, by faith and prayer. The Holy Spirit was actually bestowed upon Him with a new richness in this solemn moment; it was His royal anointing for His work of sorrow and love.

The next day after, John met Jesus, and pointed Him out to the two disciples who were with him by these significant words,

* Ἵνα φανερωθῇ τῷ Ἰσραήλ, διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι βαπτίζων. (John i. 31.)

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."* He would be readily understood by the pious Israelites who had been present at the morning and evening sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem, and had partaken of the paschal lamb, all the more if they had read the prophetic oracles in which the promised Deliverer was represented under the image of a victim.†

III. John the Baptist and Herod Antipas.

The Baptist was gone to the south of the country of Judæa, to Enon, near to Salim, a place famous for its springs in the midst of a parched and desert country.‡ Already the favour which first followed him had been succeeded by opposition. The chiefs of the nation had brought his baptism§ in question, and his disciples became so much the more jealous of his influence; therefore, they came to him complaining that Jesus seemed seeking to supplant him by performing the rite which he had instituted. This complaint elicited the beautiful testimony of the Baptist. He meets it first by a reference to the special mission entrusted to him, which places him infinitely below Messiah. Where subordination is so marked, rivalry is impossible. He represents his relation to Jesus by a poetical and touching figure, which shows how deeply he had drunk into the Old Testament imagery. Messiah is the spouse of the holy people; *he* is but the friend of the bridegroom, and his office is only to prepare the marriage feast. His joy is to hear

* John i. 19.

† See Isaiah liii.

‡ It has been attempted to place this spot in Samaria, according to the "Onomasticon" of Jerome. But we consider Wieseler's hypothesis much more plausible, which sees in Enon a contraction of En-Rimmon, a little town situated at the southern extremity of Judæa, according to Nehemiah xi. 29. It would be impossible to account for John's ministry in the country of the Samaritans.

§ This may be inferred from the discussion between the disciples of John the Baptist and the Jews about purifying. (John iii. 25.) The opposition of the Pharisees and doctors is distinctly asserted in Luke vii. 33.

the voice of the well-beloved on the eve of the realisation of the mystic union, and then to be lost as it were in his friend's glory and felicity. "He must increase, but I must decrease."* This is the motto and inspiration of the whole life of John.

This noble renunciation, this abnegation of self is the secret of his greatness and his courage. He heeds not the praise of man, therefore he panders to none, but speaks ever the same bold and manly language, protesting against evil in all its forms. This voice, which comes from the desert, is the great voice of conscience and of right. It is in the power of none to put it to silence, because it asks nothing of the world, and concedes nothing to it. Not from pride, but from humility, springs that true dignity which can stand erect under threats, because it has never yielded to caresses. John the Baptist is only a reed of the desert, according to the figure used by Jesus, but he is a reed which cannot be broken by the tempest of persecution, because it has not bowed beneath the breath of favour. This, Herod Antipas will soon learn.

The tetrarch of Galilee, a weak and passionate man, had fallen under the power of Herodias, the step-daughter of Herod the Great, the legitimate wife of his brother Philip Herod, who lived in retirement at Rome.† There Herod Antipas had met her, and conceived for her a guilty passion. The ardent and vindictive spirit of the Herods lived in this woman. She unhesitatingly abandoned her husband, whose fault was that he had condemned her to a life of obscurity; she then induced Antipas to divorce himself from his first wife, who was the daughter of Aretas, king of Petra. The latter, on learning the insult that was preparing for her, fled to the Castle of

* Ἐκεῖνον δεῖ αὐξάνειν, ἐμὲ δὲ ἐλαττοῦσθαι (John iii. 30). The close of the chapter, in spite of the ingenious observations of M. Godet, appears to me an expansion of the Evangelist's. The ideas and expressions evidently transcend the Baptist's point of view.

† Josephus, "Ant." XVIII. 5. The Jewish historian gives him his patronymic of Herod. He is not thus in contradiction with our Evangelists, as M. Renan asserts.

Machærus, situated at the eastern extremity of the Dead Sea; and taking refuge with her father, subsequently raised a war against her unworthy husband.* Antipas was revelling in his criminal pleasures, surrounded only with obsequious courtiers, when an importunate voice was heard, echoing that inner voice which none can wholly stifle. This was the voice of the son of the desert, the new prophet, whose popularity, as Josephus tells us, had already disquieted Herod.† "It is not lawful for thee," said John the Baptist, "to take thy brother's wife." This invocation of the eternal law of right, which took no account of his royal will, filled him with madness; he could not endure this appeal to the higher power which issues its sovereign decrees in the secret of the soul. What! should there be anything forbidden to the prince before whom all men cringed? This importunate protest, which was all the more hurtful because so well founded, must needs be crushed. The unwelcome censor was thrown into the depths of a gloomy dungeon in the citadel of Machærus. But Herod's feeble and vacillating soul could not thus be freed from his influence; he felt in his deeper self that the Baptist was right; he listened sometimes to his passion, sometimes to conscience, and sometimes he even took counsel of his prisoner. But they were only the hesitations of a nature without any moral force, and the smiles of Herodias were more persuasive than the words of the austere preacher. In the mad elation of a feast, celebrated at the very castle of Machærus, on the occasion of Herod's birthday, the king made a rash vow to the daughter of Herodias, to recompense her for having forgotten her royal dignity, and charmed the assembly by a dance worthy of a courtesan. He pledged himself to give her whatever she should ask. Counselled by her mother, she asked the head of John the Baptist. Thus, it seemed to her, that stern voice might be stifled which

* Josephus, "Ant." XVIII. 5, 1.

† Josephus ("Ant." XVIII. 5, 2) passes over in silence the true cause of the Baptist's imprisonment.

made itself heard, even in the tumult of the feast. Though absent, he was there, a silent and terrible guest, rebuking the adulterous woman. But it was in vain that the noble head was struck off; from the blood of the prophet arose a yet more terrible cry. Herod could never cease to hear it for a single day, for as soon as the fame of Jesus began to be spread abroad in Galilee, he exclaimed, with blanched cheek, "This is John the Baptist."* Men may kill the body, but truth and conscience they cannot kill.

To the period of John's imprisonment at Machærus belongs a remarkable episode, to which we shall refer again in the history of Christ's public career, and from which very exaggerated conclusions have been drawn. It has been asserted that his previous testimony is branded with suspicion, by the simple fact that, in an hour of doubt, he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus about His mission.† But where do we find the life of the soul unfolding without struggle or retrogression? It has its alternations, which will not bend to the laws of an inflexible logic. John, as we have said, belonged to the old covenant; he looked for a speedy and glorious manifestation of Messiah. This manifestation tarried; nay more, it seemed to recede day by day, for the more Jesus was known, the less He was acknowledged. Here was an insoluble contradiction for the Forerunner; it pressed heavily on him in the long inaction of the prison life, in which his heroic heart was wearing itself away. Is it strange to see in such circumstances a cloud passing over his faith? He must know little of human nature who can so deem it.

It is not wonderful that John the Baptist left behind him a school distinct from the little group of the apostles, traces of which are to be found even into the middle of the first century. His religious point of view was incomplete. The truthfulness of the evangelical story comes out the more saliently from these contrasts, which are inevitable in a transition period like

* Matt. xiv. 2. † Luke vii. 18, 19.

that of the Forerunner. Jesus Himself described the work of John the Baptist in a manner which explains all contradictions, "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they which are gorgeously apparelled and live delicately are in kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you among those that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* In other words, if none among the servants of God surpasses the Baptist in moral greatness, he, nevertheless, does not pass the boundary line which separates the two Testaments. Had he possessed greater light, he would have been less heroic, for there is no work so noble as his who prepares the triumph in which he does not share. The very dimness and incompleteness of his view only the more justifies that judgment of Christ's, which is a sufficient recompense for all his labours and sufferings. "Verily, I say unto you, among those that are born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

* Luke vii. 25, 30.

CHAPTER III.

THE TEMPTATION.

TWEEN the baptism of Christ and the last testimony ndered to Him by the Forerunner, occurs one of the momentous events of his moral life. He also passed h that great school of the wilderness, in which Moses ohn the Baptist were moulded into the mightiest witnesses d. When a man has to be the representative of a solemn oly idea, it is well to live face to face with it, and look at rt from all the modifications to which it is subjected in n life. In solitude it puts on all its royalty; there it its absolute character, conceding nothing to the compro- of an imperfect realisation. But the desert was not to merely a holy retreat; it was also the scene of His first at and His first victory. The Redeemer there passed gh that great trial of the free will, without which no moral ıy is complete. Here we are compelled to accept ervedly the mystery of His utter humiliation. If im- bility is claimed for Him, He is withdrawn from the true tions of earthly life, His humanity remains only an n, a transparent veil through which appears His impassible ty. Being no more like unto us, He is no more ours. e moving drama of a moral conflict succeeds I know not metaphysical phantasmagoria. He can no longer be n of as the subject of temptation or trial. Instead of the of a new human race, we have only a mental creation y of the inventions of Gnostics. Let us bring down the t from this cold empyrean of theology where He is but a

dogma, and say with Irenæus, *Erat homo certans pro patribus.* "He was truly a man fighting for his home." Let us receive that strange and sublime text of the New Testament, "He learned obedience,"* which signifies that from the state of natural and instinctive innocence, He had to raise Himself to a holiness of choice, a perilous transit in which the first Adam fell, but in which the second conquered by the sole arms of faith and prayer, and not by girding on as an impenetrable panoply His eternal Godhead.

The scene of the desert was in fact the counterpart of that which transpired more than four thousand years before, in the shades of Eden. Both belong to that mysterious region into which the human mind can enter only by means of majestic symbols, which have nevertheless corresponding moral realities. The first father of mankind—bound to his descendants by so close a union, that he in a manner included them in himself—underwent the great ordeal of free existence in a sojourn of beauty and glory; the second Adam passed through it in a fearful solitude, image of a world deep-graven with the brand of the fall and of condemnation. Those denuded rocks, that reddened soil scorched by a burning sun, that sulphurous sea stretching like a shroud over the accursed cities, all this land of death, mute and motionless as the grave, formed a fitting scene for the decisive conflict of the Man of Sorrows. There is contrast strongly marked in many points between the first and second temptation; it is no more a question of the simple perpetuation of a happy union with God, but of the recovery of this union under the bitter conditions which have resulted from its rupture. It would be taking a narrow view of the moral conflict of the life of Christ to limit it to the forty days spent in the wilderness. In reality, His whole life was a conflict, but its two great battles were fought at the commencement and the close of His ministry—in the desert of Judæa and the garden of Gethsemane.

* Heb. v. 8.

In the temptation in the wilderness, we witness the appearance of that mysterious being, who is represented in the first book of the Bible, as connected with the history of the fall. Satan, as we have shown, is not the Persian Ahriman, who represents the element of evil in nature as well as in moral life; he is a fallen angel, created in light and purity like all God's creatures, but having failed to abide in them.* Doubtless he also fell under the trial of moral freedom, universally imposed on intelligent beings made in the likeness of God. We know nothing of the nature of this trial, of the manner of his rebellion, nor of the sphere in which it took place. It is impossible to admit or reject with any certainty the hypothesis so often sustained, that the gigantic wrecks on which the new life of our planet has flourished, give evidence of a tragical history before the human era, in which man was preceded on the earth by beings higher than himself in their origin, who have therefore fallen lower, and are become the natural and desperate enemies of the race which has succeeded them. We are bound to hold the reality of the existence of devils; nothing in reason opposes the possibility of moral beings, different from man, more utterly perverted, and endowed with a subtlety of nature which allows them wider and more rapid action. There are times when the imperceptible barrier which divides us from the invisible world—so far from our eyes, so near to our hearts —seems to fall altogether. Such are the great religious crises of humanity; now there is no crisis comparable to the opening of the era of Christ. We do not think then that we are yielding to any superstition, in recognising in the temptation the direct intervention of the chief of those evil spirits, who are the worst enemies of man.

But what form did this intervention assume? Evidently the account in our Gospels cannot be taken literally. The mountain whence are visible all the kingdoms of the world nowhere exists; we are thus carried at once into the symbolical.

* See John viii. 44.

Yet we cannot see in the temptation a mere parable, translated and amplified into popular speech by the disciples of Jesus, the only object of which would have been to determine the true character of His mission as Messiah. This would be to destroy the moral fact, which is, in our view, one of capital importance.* The temptation was real. We mean not that the pure soul of Jesus was for a single instant drawn towards evil, but it was unquestionably solicited by evil from without by means of a vision.† There is no difficulty in supposing visions which in no way suspend moral action. The temptation assumes all the more importance, the more it is freed from every lower element. The conflict would be one little worthy of Christ if the gist of it were only the resistance of hunger, abstinence from a presumptuous action, and the refusal of material glory. The question proposed belongs to a far wider sphere; it is the moral question itself, such as it was presented to the first Adam, such as it presents itself to every free creature. He is directly called to decide if He will fulfil the one supreme law of the moral world, the sum of which is

* This is Neander's idea ("Vie de Jésus." I. p. 108), who on this point has yielded to the influence of Schleiermacher. The latter was led by his determinism to suppress the moral conflict in the life of Christ. As to the chronological difficulties which he raises, they are not at all insurmountable. Nothing prevents our supposing that the temptation took place before the last interview with John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan (John i 29).

† Calvin himself admitted the possibility of this interpretation ("Comment. sur le N. T." I., p. 121). We will only mention Lange's singular explanation, which supposes that the emissaries of the Sanhedrim, who had interrogated John the Baptist, went into the wilderness to propose to Jesus, to assert Himself as a theocratic Messiah. They thus themselves played, on this occasion, the part of the tempter, under whose influence they visibly acted (Lange's "Leben Jesu," I., pp. 195–205). This revival of a ridiculous hypothesis of Paulus is not happy. Strauss connects the temptation with the sojourn of Israel in the desert; he sees in it only a myth, fabricated from the legends of the Old Testament ("Leben Jesu," p. 331). We recommend on this subject the interesting and sensible pages devoted to it by M. Lutteroth in his "Essai d'interprétation sur Saint Matthieu," pp. 41–47.

obedience and love, or if He will seek His own satisfaction, His own interest. The question is not stated in a vague and general way; it is as Messiah that He is tempted; that which is aimed at is the miraculous power which He possesses, or at least with which He is invested by God day by day. This power, employed for selfish and personal ends, might serve first to procure easily for Messiah and for the people, who would receive Him with acclaim, all material advantages. It might then become the means of dazzling men by brilliant signs, which would satisfy their passion for the marvellous, and after having given possession, it would give glory. Nothing could be easier than to obtain by its means, power and an earthly kingdom, for no throne would be exalted enough for a Messiah, who should multiply marvels and make plenty and riches spring up beneath his feet. Such was the scope of the temptations which passed before the mind of Jesus, in His vision in the desert after His forty days' fasting.

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* In other words, place Thyself above the order of Providence for the satisfaction of Thine hunger. Jesus is carried in spirit into the Holy City, to the pinnacle of the temple, the centre of that theocracy of which he might so easily assume the sceptre. "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."† In other words, if Thou art the the Messiah, work brilliant miracles, prodigies the result of which shall be to astonish and fascinate the people. Then the world with its glory appears to Jesus from the summit of an ideal mountain. "All this power and glory will I give thee," says the tempter, "if thou wilt fall down and worship me."‡

* Matt. iv. 3. † Ch. iv. 5, 6.

‡ Matt. iv. 8, 9. The difference between Matthew and Luke in the order of the temptation is of no moment, except on the theory of plenary inspiration. It is at once insoluble and insignificant. The order of the facts in Matthew appears the more logical.

In other words, the glory and power shall be Messiah's if He consents to act in the spirit of the prince of this world. Under this triple form the temptation is one. Work miracles for Thine own advantage. Be Thine own ambassador and not God's. Seek Thyself, instead of consecrating Thyself to the glory of Thy Father's kingdom. In the very nature of things temptation must always be one, for there is only one way of violating the moral law, namely, to live to oneself and not to God, to substitute selfishness for love.

The suggestions of the tempter are clothed in a religious garb; he quotes text like a scribe. After all, what he does in the desert is but to sum up, in expressive symbols, the whole programme of the false Messianic dreams of the Jew, who only disguised under holy words a carnal and earthly ambition. The Christ of Hebrew apocalypses, such a Christ as the contemporaries of Jesus desired and looked for, answered in all points to the false Messiah whose image Satan held up before the true. It seems the very voice of the Jewish Sibyl of Alexandria, vibrating with ardent and earthly desires. Is not the deliverer painted, in these famous oracles, as a man with a sword girt on, and crushing to dust every rival power? Is he not destined to open for the land of Judæa the springs of boundless plenty, and to make wine flow freely from the fruitful stock? Is he not, finally, to work by great scenic effects? His reign is represented under the brilliant colours of a theocratic millennium. This is what popular feeling demanded at the time of Christ; it was excited by His miracles, especially by those which promised material gain, such as the multiplication of the loaves. The multitudes would make Him a king; and if He had lent himself to their will, they would have hailed Him with enthusiasm.* He had only to go with the tide of opinion to assure His immediate dominion. The temptation in the desert was, then, no chimera; it was in harmony with the truth of facts.

Jesus hesitated not a moment. To each temptation pre-

* John vi. 15.

sented to Him to declare Himself as the theocratic Messiah, the idol of degenerate Judaism, He replied by a word of the Lord, against which there was no appeal. To the suggestion that He should change the stones into bread, He opposes His faith in that divine and wise Providence which suffices for every need. "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* That text of Deuteronomy† had reference to the marvellous manner in which Israel was fed with manna in the desert. He who depends on a God so good and so mighty, has only to commit himself to Him with entire confidence; the gift of working miracles has been bestowed upon Him for other ends than the supply of His bodily wants. Jesus repels with no less determination, the proposal to invoke the divine intervention, and to produce a striking effect by a useless prodigy. "It is written," said He, "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."‡ To desire a miracle for such an end would be to imitate Israel, imperiously demanding a new manifestation of the power of Jehovah.‖ Finally, Jesus rejects, with holy indignation, the infamous bargain of the tempter, who promises Him earthly royalty, on condition of His falling down and worshipping him. The tempter doubtless offered, in this case, that which he in truth possessed; for it is certain that if Jesus had fulfilled His mission as Messiah in a spirit of selfishness and pride, the world would not have had crowns enough to bestow upon Him. This time He used the divine word as a sword. "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."§

The great declaration is now made; Christ is come not to be obeyed, but to obey. He has given Himself unreservedly to God and to man. He has made His choice between selfishness and love; the second Adam has retracted the rebellion of

* Matt. iv. 4. † Deut. viii. 3. ‡ Matt. iv. 7.
‖ Compare Deut. vi. 16 with Exodus xvii. 2–7.
§ Matt. iv. 10. Deut. vi. 13. The quotation is not literal. Jesus Christ refers to the great commandment of the Old Testament.

the first; He has come out conqueror from the great moral ordeal, but the victory is itself a sacrifice, an immolation; it leads not to earthly glory, but to death; not to the throne, but to the cross; for on entering on this path of obedience and love, He will come into collision with all the prejudices of the Jewish nation, He will belie all its hopes and kindle all its hatred. A Messiah who will not reign in the sense in which Jerusalem understands His kingdom, must perish; king or victim He must be; there is no alternative. Every time He repelled a temptation of the Wicked One He ascended another step of the altar of sacrifice. Nothing was wanting but the consummation; the Son of man has already accepted in its essence all the ignominy and all the grief that is awaiting Him.

Such is the solemn grandeur of this conflict in the desert, in which we see Jesus victorious, but victorious according to that mysterious law of His kingdom, which makes suffering and death the first elements of victory. The events of His life will be but the development and consequence of the great moral fact, which has just been accomplished in that deep seclusion. Thus is attested that royal liberty of the Son, to whom sorrow and shame will be but the fulfilment of His freely accepted lot. "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself."* That which is branded as ignominy and defeat on earth, is glory and triumph in heaven. At the close of His victory, therefore, Jesus sees angels coming to minister to Him, and the wild beasts lie harmless at His feet, as in the first days of Eden.† Paradise is born again in this desert solitude, "and the wilderness blossoms as the rose;" the seraphim who keep the gates of paradise adore the Son of man, in token that the great work of reparation is begun. Eden, closed and blighted by rebellion, shall be opened again by obedience and sacrifice to the new race of man, when its head shall have accomplished all His work in the domain of outward fact, as He has already accomplished it in the moral kingdom.

* John x. 18. † Mark i. 13.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLAN OF JESUS.—REALITY AND UNITY OF THE DIVINE PLAN.

JESUS comes forth from the desert fully conscious of His mission. He knows not only in what spirit it is to be accomplished, but also in what it will consist. It is this perfect understanding of His work which we intend by His plan. He had not wrought it out with deep and patient meditation; He had not reached it through careful combination and minute calculation. No; this plan—like all which bears the stamp of perfection and of greatness, as well in the sphere of action as of art,—sprang up at once spontaneous and complete in His heart. It was rather a determination of the will than a conception of the mind. It was the first triumph of love over the spirit of pride and selfishness, the trophy brought from the great conflict in the desert. This plan is, in fact, precisely the reverse of that suggested by the tempter; it is the Messiahship of the Spirit, opposed to the carnal and ambitious Messiahship of the synagogue. We have now simply to mark its great outlines; it will belong to the history itself to unfold it before our eyes in gradual accomplishment.

It is disputed, first of all, whether Jesus had really any intention of declaring Himself as Messiah, from the outset of His public career. He was the most pious Israelite of His generation (it is said), with soul most alive to holy influences, but He had not at first any other purpose than to be the faithful servant of God. It was only later that, led on by the popular enthusiasm, and by the ardour of one of His country-

men (we dare not say one of His disciples), He allowed Himself to be recognised and proclaimed as Messiah at Cæsarea Philippi. This hypothesis is entirely contradicted by the Gospel, and in order to maintain it, texts must be submitted to the strangest manipulation, those only being retained, in whole or in part, which accord with the preconceived idea.* Not only, as we have already observed, does it become necessary to suppress the account of the baptism of Jesus, and that of the temptation, but the whole of the first part of His ministry has to be interpreted against its natural sense. The glorious scene in the synagogue of Nazareth, when the young Master applies directly to Himself the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Messiah,† has, on this theory, to be explained away into nothing more than an edifying sermon. Those twelve men, leaving their kindred and their occupation to follow Him, are moved only by an impulse of friendship. When He expounds the Mosaic law with authority, as in the Sermon on the Mount, He is only an interpreter of the Old Testament, more skilful than His predecessors.‡ That He forgives sins is an illusion; He only reminds men of the goodness of God—an act in no way distinguishing Him from His fellows, in spite of the scandal which it provokes. If He demands of those who will follow Him a devotion so entire that every natural affection is to give way before it, He only acts as the champion of a noble cause. Lastly, He may, without believing Himself to be the Messiah, declare Himself to be greater than Jonah or Solomon, and greater than the Temple, and pronounce condemnation on entire cities for the sole sin of not having received Him.‖ Such

* M. Schenkel has written all the first part of his last book from this point of view. ("Characterbild Jesu," pp. 56–80). It requires real feats of strength to contort the text to his meaning. The late essay of M. Colani ("Jésus Christ et les croyances messianiques de son temps") belongs to the same school.

† See Luke iv. 6. ‡ See Matt. v. 21, 22.

‖ See p. 55 of M. Colani's essay on "Jésus Christ et les croyances messianiques de son temps." I know no more positive

explanations cannot stand before a moment's impartial examination of the texts, even if it be granted that these shall be taken only from the synoptical Gospels, and that the early chapters of the fourth Gospel be abandoned.

We will not, then, stay to prove that Jesus regarded Himself as Messiah from the very commencement of His ministry. The history of His life will be a sufficient answer. We admit that, acting as He did, in full consciousness of His mission, He yet rarely asserted the title which belonged to Him; sometimes He even enjoined a certain reserve on the sick whom He healed, and on His disciples, in order to avoid dangerous misconceptions. But from the first day to the last, He exercised an authority which could have no other basis or justification than His character of Messiah.

Some historians of Jesus do not deny His having had a fixed plan, but they dispute its unity. While He is accused, on the one hand, of having started with theocratic and political views, which were modified by rude contact with men, so that ultimate spirituality was the bitter fruit of experience;* it is asserted by others that a certain degree of spirituality characterised the opening of His career, but that it closed with the excitement of the fanatic.† On both suppositions, He would be the sport of circumstances, not their master, and must have succumbed to their influence in the most essential portions of His doctrine. He was *not* so moulded by circumstances, either in the one direction or the other. The history of His life will show us the continuous development of one single thought, under diverse forms, and with various explanations. Where do we find a trace of the theocrat seeking to found a material kingdom, in the divine Preacher of Nazareth, describing

refutation of his opinion than the texts which he quotes, in spite of his endeavours to weaken their force.

* This opinion, which found favour in the Lessing school of the 18th century, has been reproduced in modern theology by De Wette and Hase, in the first editions of his "Vie de Jésus."

† This is the fundamental point of Renan's "Vie de Jésus."

His mission by these words of Isaiah: "He hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted." In His very first sermons, He proclaims Himself the king of the poor in spirit, of thirsty and sorrowful souls, of the meek and the persecuted. On the other hand, we defy the most scrupulous exegesis to discover a sensible difference between the Galilean Christ and the Christ of Jerusalem. If His fanaticism consists in His claiming faith in Himself, and chastising unsparingly the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, it goes back to that same Sermon on the Mount, and it is by the waters of the quiet Lake of Tiberias that the august figure first appears in its majesty.

II. The Kingdom of Jesus.

Having established the reality and unity of the purpose of Christ, we have to consider it in itself. What was it that Jesus sought? Was it His design to found a free brotherhood of elect spirits, raised equally above religious ceremonies and the uncongenial duties of public life, for the celebration of an ideal worship in honour of some vague Divinity whom, in a moment of enthusiastic illusion, He called His Father? In other words, did He seek to found a religion of enfranchised intelligences, which should have no fixed formula or belief, and should manifest itself by no defined mode of action? We leave this hypothesis to any impartial reader of the Gospels.* Or did Jesus preach only the inner life, and point man back into himself? Was His work to consist in a simple idealisation of Judaism, issuing in a sort of Socratic humanism?† Evidently, in order to sustain such a theory, a considerable portion of the Gospel narrative must be omitted, and the Sermon on the Mount only retained after careful pruning, for it, too, contains

* I challenge any one to find any other idea of the design of Christ in M. Renan's book ("Vie de Jésus," p. 91).

† Such is Baur's opinion ("Die Christliche Kirche der drei erst. Jahrhund.," pp. 34, 35). See also Strauss' new "Life of Jesus," pp. 204 and following.

many other elements. Or, again, did He seek to present the ideal type of man walking in the ways of righteousness?* Then His mission was simply to hold up an image of holiness, and it is inexplicable, in such a view, why He should speak of it as a travail of sorrow, on which hangs the salvation of the world. There is an approach to the truth, though nothing more than this, when, with the father of modern theology in Germany, Jesus is regarded as the founder of a new society, truly attached to His person, because He is the only man in whom the divine consciousness shines out in its pure splendour.† In this theory, His one purpose is to reveal Himself to man; He occupies a central and unique position in the development of the religious life. But this system takes no account of sin and its terrible consequences. In presence of such a calamity it is not enough to manifest the divine life; it is necessary to remove the obstacle which prevents its realisation and development. There is a great evil to be relieved and repaired. The redemptive aspect of the work of Christ must not, therefore, be thus left in the shade.

If, apart from any preconceived idea, we seek to learn the plan of Jesus from Himself, we must not sever Him from the conditions under which it was to be carried out. He was nurtured and trained in the midst of Judaism; He took the religion of the Old Testament as the basis and starting-point of His work, and did not hesitate to recognise, in the most explicit manner, the legitimacy of the Mosaic institutions. "Salvation is of the Jews," He said, at the beginning of His ministry.‡ There was, then, nothing revolutionary in His work; He marked its close connection with what had gone before it. But he knows also that He is inaugurating the definitive era of revelation. He does not claim to be merely the reformer and purifier of a degenerate worship; He claims

* This is the fundamental idea of M. Réville's writings.

† Schleiermacher ("Leben Jesu," pp. 306–317). See M. Bonifas' thesis on Redemption, according to Schleiermacher's idea.

‡ John iv. 22.

to bring to maturity a religion which, casting its roots deep into the past, can find in Him alone its full development. He is not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* He does not do away with the old covenant, since He is the first to proclaim its rights; but He fulfils it by realising that which it prepared and prefigured. He frees divine truth from all the forms in which it had been enshrouded and protected, as the ear is enclosed in the husk, until the harvest time. This fulfilment implies the abolition of all that is transitory and preparatory. Thus, in the very sermon in which He declares that He is come not to destroy, but to fulfil the law, He does not scruple to set aside more than one Mosaic ordinance, as of limited application. That which circumscribes, He destroys; by spiritualising the old, He fulfils and enlarges it. Hence that royal freedom which He asserts, and those bold and truly divine words, in which He proclaims Himself greater than the Temple, and Lord even of the Sabbath day.†

There is one fundamental idea throughout the whole of the Old Testament. It is that of the kingdom of God. To re-establish this kingdom in a world which has been the scene of man's rebellion, is evidently to restore the world to its primal order—that is, to destroy the great moral anarchy, which has entailed on it all the ills and woes under which it groans. In fact, the kingdom of God is the divine sovereignty acknowledged by mankind; it is the reconciliation of heaven and earth by obedience, and this obedience cannot be other than painful, since it must needs begin by extirpating sin, and setting against the spirit of rebellion the spirit of sacrifice. The Old Testament came to a fallen race in its rude infancy, and adapting its revelations and institutions to the gross ignorance of men, it

* Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι, ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι (Matt. v. 17). I entirely adopt Neander's beautiful explanation of this text ("Vie de Jésus," I., pp. 132–177). See also Schleiermacher, "Leben Jesu," I., p. 313, and all the admirable lecture devoted to this subject (pp. 310-317.)

† Matt. xii. 6.

embodied great thoughts in sensible appearances. The kingdom of God was first realised in the form of a theocracy: it had its boundaries, like any other country, and, like an earthly king, God made the Temple of Jerusalem His dwelling-place. The separation between the sacred and the profane was marked with minute care in the external life of the Jew: the law dealt first with the life of the body, in order to rise, little by little, to the life of the soul. In the same way, sacrifice was an essentially material act: the blood of bulls and of goats flowed in streams over the altar. The divine law was itself incorporated with a body of outward ceremonies. Thus was the kingdom of God localised in the Mosaïc institutions, so as the better to lend itself to that gradual, religious education by which fallen humanity must be trained. It is, nevertheless, easy to discern the immortal spirit under the sensible form and symbol, which only enveloped it, in order to render it in some measure appreciable to a people whose "heart had waxed gross." This spirit breathes freely on the heights of prophecy. Prophecy proclaims in clearest tones that all nations shall be blessed in the posterity of Abraham, that a sacrifice more worthy of God than that of bulls and of goats shall be offered to eternal justice; it hails in anticipation the servant of the Lord who is to be at once the propitiatory victim and the king of the new Israel. Jesus Christ, in abolishing all that was still local and exclusive in the idea of the kingdom of God, only fulfilled the old covenant, and this was His purpose from the very beginning of His ministry.

From the outset, that theocratic kingdom of God which had been associated with a particular people was made to give place to the true city of God—the city of souls, entered, not by the accident of birth, but by the renewing of the inner man. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,"* said Jesus, on His first sojourn in Jerusalem. Before such words all national barriers fall; the people of "free will"

* Ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (John iii 3..)

succeed to the people of the circumcision, the sons of Abraham. Entrance into the heavenly kingdom is no more an inherited privilege, it is a moral act; it is no more a national and collective, but an individual fact. The religious community is distinguished from the civil and political; moral individuality is established by that sovereign word; it is set free from the institutions by which it had been fettered in the ancient world, as well in Greek and Roman cities as in the Jewish theocracy. Conscience, liberated from every oppressive yoke, is shown to be the corner-stone of the spiritual temple. The kingdom of God becomes universal in the day when it ceases to be national. The prerogative of Israel disappears, for "the last shall be first." We shall see with what positiveness Jesus abrogated, in the domain of religion, that right of priority of which the Jewish people were so proud, and with what tenderness He sought out those who had been cut off from the synagogue, whether they were Samaritans or Gentiles. He asserts, in like manner, with a clearness which may be estimated by the hatred it excites, that the reign of the Spirit is begun: that the hedge planted around the law, not only by the puerile traditions of the Pharisees, but also by the Mosaic ritual, is to be uprooted, and that the boundless realm of the affections and the moral life is henceforward to be open to the divine sovereignty. The purely spiritual law which He promulgates seeks out and lays hold of sin in its hidden germ, in the thought of covetousness or hatred which eludes the theocratic lawgiver, but does not escape the new legislator. He proclaims that not one stone shall be left upon another of the Temple itself, that revered centre of the whole Levitical worship. All worship which is localised and attached to any sanctuary whatever, is to be merged in worship in spirit and in truth, the only adoration worthy of the God who is a Spirit.*

Such is the kingdom which Jesus seeks to set up. There is nothing chimerical in His claim, since He is Himself the king

* John iv. 24.

of the new city, and is come to accomplish the work of deliverance which alone will put an end to the old covenant. In fact, the imperfection of the first covenant arises not alone from the necessities of the case, under which divine teaching proportioned its light to the moral and intellectual capacity; its deepest source is in the lack of that real reconciliation between fallen man and God, of which it gives but the promise. Symbols and types will only cease when the links once broken shall have been reunited. The true fulfilment of the old covenant is actual redemption. Jesus is the Messiah only because He is the Redeemer, and comes to consummate the work of positive reconciliation. To found the kingdom of heaven is, as we have said, to re-establish the sovereignty of God in the heart. The sovereignty thus asserted is not that which consists in crushing the rebel under the weight of omnipotence, and breaking him by terror and the rod. This sovereignty was maintained before Christ, and no creature, be he rebellious as he may, can escape it. The question is now of a moral sovereignty which is accepted and acquiesced in, and which wins the soul to a voluntary submission. It is joined with love, and love is only rendered possible by reconciliation; so long as this is incomplete, fear casts out perfect love. Everything in this great and sublime conception of the kingdom of God points us to the redemptive work of Messiah. This, then, occupies the foremost place in His plan. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* In the synoptics, as in the fourth Gospel, Jesus ever appears as the deliverer of a fallen race, which stands in need of pardon and restoration, and He never ceases to connect this pardon and restoration with His own person. The profound discourses recorded by St. John are only the expansion of the forcible and concise words, which our three evangelists have by preference reproduced. Everywhere Jesus requires faith in Him-

* John iii. 16.

self, as the one means of deliverance; He boldly places Himself in the centre of the religious life, and when we find Him saying, in the fourth Gospel, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," there is nothing more remarkable in the words than in the multiplied acts of divine sovereignty recorded in the synoptics. The Gospels are unanimous in attributing to Him the foreknowledge of His death and resurrection—the two great facts of redemption. His entire life of holiness is included in His redeeming work, since by exhibiting in himself, from its commencement to its close, the man of perfect obedience, and by the transformation of human existence into a holy sacrifice of love, He recovers it from the curse. Therefore it is that, even before the bloody close of His career, He acts as a Saviour, pardoning sins and giving light and life to the penitent souls that come to Him.

Thus, to restore the kingdom of God, to disengage it from transitory and imperfect forms, and to work out the salvation of the world by His perfect obedience, by His sacrifice and triumph over death—such is the plan of Jesus.

This design fulfils all the past and embraces all the future, for it is not to find its realisation in the domain of the moral and ideal alone, but also in renovated and glorified nature. It is a false and bastard spiritualism which severs absolutely the spiritual from the material world. Matter is subordinate to spirit. The earth has felt the influence of moral evil. The victory of love will not be complete, till harmony and beauty banish discord and pain even from this lower realm. Hence that "regeneration"* of the world depicted in magnificent symbols by ancient prophecy, and definitely declared by Jesus in His last discourses. These symbols may have been travestied by millenarian dreamers, but it remains none the less true that the history of mankind and of the world is not destined to revolve eternally on itself; it will have its close; the final utterance will be that of righteousness and love; the partial and imperfect judgments, which are asserted from time to time, will issue

* Ἡ παλιγγενεσία; of Matthew xix. 28.

the solemn decisions of the final judgment, preceded by the universal resurrection. If this was a vain Judaistic dream, Jesus cannot be exonerated from it, for it was assuredly His conception. For ourselves, far from seeing in it an idle superstition, we bow to it as the necessary sanction of the moral law and the triumph of the true spiritual kingdom of Christ, which may not be confounded with vague idealities.

Before the final realisation of His kingdom, Jesus shows its progressive development in the midst of mankind. He likens it to leaven, which little by little "leavens the whole lump,"* a familiar image which admirably describes the purely moral influence of the truth, which is to spread from the centre to the circumference of human life. If Jesus is fully conscious of His purpose, He shows no feverish haste in its fulfilment. The representative of the law of liberty, He carefully avoids promulgating, under the form of juridical institutions, the new covenant which He came to introduce. Thus He accomplishes the transition from the one covenant to the other, with a prudence which proves His respect for conscience. He will not, to use his own figure, put the new wine into old bottles; He seeks to form new hearts and new spirits for the great truths He brings. Therefore He submits himself to the ordinances and forms, of which He proclaims the abrogation. It is wholly unjust to dispute the new character of the teaching of Christ, on the ground of this wise reserve. Judaism was not to be abolished judaically. Liberty and spirituality are not born of decretals.

III. The titles which Jesus claims.

We see how closely the foundation and growth of the kingdom of God is bound up with the person of Jesus. It rests entirely on the manifestation of Himself, or rather on the gift of Himself, as its basis. It is important to observe in what light He regarded Himself from the commencement, and in

* Matthew xiii. 33.

what sense he accepted the designations, by which Messiah was characterised in the Old Testament.

The first of these designations was that of the Son of David. Hebrew prophecy had proclaimed by all its voices, that the deliverer should descend from the father of the great national dynasty. "There shall come forth a rod out of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him . . . with righteousness shall he judge the poor."* Jesus is continually called in the Gospels the Son of David, by those who recognise in Him the Messiah.† We find no trace of that sort of reserve or repugnance attributed to Him with reference to this honourable title, as though He were lending Himself shamefacedly to a superstition, which He had not the courage to contradict. He accepted this name for the very simple reason that it belonged to Him, for, as we have shown, He was actually the Son of David. There is no justice in adducing against this assertion the saying of Jesus to the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David: He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? . . . If David then call him Lord, how is he then his son?"‡ Jesus did not at all deny that He was the Son of David: it is certain that the Evangelist who records these words saw no such meaning in them, since he attributes to Jesus most positively descent from the royal family. But Christ has none the less a right to lay claim to a higher origin; we are thus brought back to the mystery of His birth, which made Him at once Son of David and Son of God. He is the Lord of Him whose descendant He is. This paradox is clearly marked in the very first chapter of Matthew, which, side by side with the genealogy of David's son, places the account of the miraculous conception.

* See Isaiah xi. 1–3. Compare with Jeremiah xxiii.

† See Matt. ix. 27; xv. 22. Mark x. 48. Luke xviii. 38. John vii. 42.

‡ Matt. xiii. 42. See M. Colani's Essay, p. 69. The author only sees in this text the affirmation of the purely spiritual Kingship of Jesus. He does not explain how He claims to be David's Lord.

Messiah is frequently designated Son of God in our first Gospels. This title is given Him by a voice divine on the banks of the Jordan, and on the Mount of Transfiguration.* The disciples, filled with admiration by the glorious manifestation of His power, hail Him by this name.† He Himself, in the parable of the husbandmen, marks the distance between Himself and the prophets, by declaring that they were but the servants of the Lord of the vineyard, while He is the Son. The decisive ground of His ultimate condemnation is, that He declares Himself before the Sanhedrim to be the Son of God.‡ His judges could scarcely have raised the cry of blasphemy, if He had laid claim to that incomparable dignity, only in the modified sense ascribed to Him by our modern interpreters. If He had simply meant to say that He reflected the divine life more purely than any other man, that He was the most faithful servant of God, He would not have used words so fearfully equivocal, and which led the Jews to commit a crime without parallel. These paltry explanations cannot stand before the words of Jesus in the first Gospel: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."§ In order to sustain the theory of a radical difference between the Christ of the synoptics and the Christ of St. John, it is necessary to reject arbitrarily the beginning and the end of this text. Is it not more simple to take as its commentary the decisive words of the fourth Gospel, "I and My Father are One?"‖ "God gave His only begotten Son unto the world."¶ It is asserted that these bold affirmations are more

* See Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. Mark ix. 7. Luke ix. 35.
† Matt. xiv. 33.
‡ Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. Luke xxii. 70.
§ Matt. xi. 27.
‖ Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν (John x. 30).
¶ John iii. 16. It is not just to bring forward in opposition to this fundamental idea of the fourth Gospel, John x. 34–36. What is there given is, as we shall see, only an argument *a fortiori*, which may not be isolated from the whole context of John's Gospel.

fanatic than the famous motto of the despot, "*L'Etat, c'est moi.*" They are declared to be the signs of positive madness.* Let it then be at least admitted that this is the madness of the whole Christian Church, not merely the frenzy of an excited man; it is the insanity of an entire religion which, from its first day until now, has found its life in this idea or this reproach; for this view of the divine Sonship is inherent in its very essence, and in the whole conception of that kingdom of God of which Jesus claimed to be, and was in reality the founder.

The name which Jesus seems to have Himself used by preference was that of Son of man. It is impossible not to see in this more than a mere allusion to Psalm viii., which depicts in simple and pathetic colours the frailty of humanity: "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honour."† It is indubitable that the designation, Son of man, carried back the contemporaries of Jesus to the great oracles of the book of Daniel, so popular at that period. The Son of man, in Daniel, is not a mere personification of the people of Israel; it is the title given to Israel's victorious head, who is none other than Messiah.‡ How can there be a doubt on this point, when the oracle declares so positively and clearly, that the future leader of the chosen people shall bring in the final judgment.§ Jesus takes to Himself this title of Son of man

Schleiermacher endeavours in vain, in his "Life of Jesus," to reduce the divinity of Christ to a simple moral oneness with God (p. 282).

* Strauss, "Vie de Jésus."

† Psalm viii. 5, 6.

‡ See Daniel vii. 13,.14.

§ Daniel ix. 24, 25. M. Colani lays stress on the question of of Jesus to His disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" (Matt. xvi. 13). But is it not possible that He should at once assert his Messiahship and ask what is thought of Him? Were there not diverse and contradictory ideas of Messiah among his people?

pre-eminently, when He is laying claim to acts of sovereignty which belong to Messiah alone. Thus he declares that the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath,* that He has authority on earth to forgive sins, that He has power to save that which is lost.† Lastly, when He proclaims His coming again in glory to judge the world and raise the dead, He says emphatically that the "Son of man shall be seen coming in the clouds with power and great glory."‡ It follows that Jesus, in employing this name, as distinctly points to Himself as Messiah, as when he accepts the title of Son of David and Son of God. No doubt he means to express by it His intimate union with mankind; He makes Himself its representative, the second Adam, the spiritual King of the fallen race, and partaker of all its sufferings. He is Messiah, precisely because He has taken on Him our nature, with all its infirmities which are not moral blemishes. But on the other hand, He only fully realises the human ideal, and is only, in an absolute sense, the type of man, by virtue of His divine life; for the only full consummation for a being made in the likeness of God must be union with God. Thus it may be said that Jesus was all the more truly Son of man, because He was in a yet higher sense Son of God. There is a real and sublime synonymy between these two titles of honour; they alone explain the glorious name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Saviour, which He bears most commonly, because it was to save the world it behoved Him to be at once Son of man and Son of God. His high dignity is then the first condition of the realisation of His plan.

IV. The Church and the Apostolate.

* Mark ii. 28.

† Matt. ix. 6. Mark ii. 10. How M. Colani can see here nothing but a mere human fact passes comprehension ("Thèse," p. 79).

‡ Matt. xxiv. 30. This is another text which is swept away with a stroke of the pen. In refuting M. Colani's thesis we have at the same time refuted the chapter on the doctrine of Jesus in the "Vorlesungen ueber neutestamentliche Theologie," by Baur, a posthumous work, published in 1854. It contains the same fundamental ideas.



... the Gospel a formal in
Christ. This spiritual city c
a Lycurgus; its institutions
new life, and this life has first
In its origin the Church is n
Temple; it will detach itself
inner development, as the
Still it exists in germ from
Jesus.* Its foundation is lai
attach themselves to His pers
love, and leave all to follow H
Judaism, and excommunicatio
an ever deepening line of dema
cratic body and the new comm
is not at first fully conscious o

That the intention of Jes
sufficiently proved by the ca
night of prayer, He chooses
employ in an especial mann

* In Matt. xvii. 17, the very w
its general sense of a religious a
† Luke vi. 12-16.

number is evidently symbolical, and points to the twelve tribes of God's ancient people. Jesus shows clearly that He is the founder of the true Israel. These twelve apostles will be the spiritual patriarchs, the fathers of that peculiar people which will only be composed of voluntary adherents alone. *Gens sine prole nata.* The apostolic office is not the institution of a new hierarchy, destined to perpetuate the Levitical and sacerdotal tribe; the very number of those invested with it indicates plainly that they represent the new people of God as a whole; they have no peculiar authority, neither that of decreeing doctrine nor of pardoning sins, for it cannot be established that the power of the keys was committed to them in any exclusive manner. It was entrusted to all the disciples, and is thus reduced to a simple proclamation of the general terms of pardon.* The treasury of divine grace belongs to the whole Church. It is better than a treasury; it is that living spring of which Christ said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." What then is the apostolic office, rightly estimated? It is, so to speak, the normal representation of primitive Christianity—of the Church which saw Christ face to face, which directly heard His voice, and received from Him the great commission of preserving His memory to the world. The apostles are witnesses chosen and accredited by Jesus Himself, and everything rests definitely on their testimony; they are the pillars of the spiritual temple. They formed the first nucleus of the Church, that which came closest to the centre of all truth and life. Hence the unwearied labours of Jesus devoted to the spiritual education of the twelve. These rough, uncultured natures were like precious marble, not yet

* The passage, Matt. xviii. 18, in which Jesus confers o followers the power of binding and loosing, forms part general instructions addressed to all Christians. Yet m declaration of the right of pardoning sins was made, apostles alone, but to all the disciples, as may be v comparison of John xx. 19; Luke xxiv. 33.

polished, but from which the great Master would bring forth a monument to His praise.

The apostolical commission thus defined is irreconcilable either with direct succession in a sacerdotal body, or with a hierarchial primacy.* It is the prototype of the Church herself; to her will be entrusted the charge of appointing the authorities and offices essential to every well-regulated body; she will create them successively in the plenitude of her liberty, giving them, by her election, a representative value kindred to that possessed by the apostolate, but without derogating from the eternal priesthood and permanent kingship of Christ, without forgetting that the entire new Israel is a people of kings and priests, and that since the one reparative sacrifice has been made, no other offering is required than the freewill offering of the heart.† If, then, the appointment of apostles formed part of the plan of Christ, it is none the less true that He left to the Church herself the charge of her own organisation under the direction of the Divine Spirit. Except baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were only instituted at the close of His ministry, He imposed no form or ritual.

We see, in this sacred reserve, the same seal of spirituality which is so marked in His entire career. His design was to found the kingdom of God by His holy life and sacrifice, to perpetuate it by apostolic testimony, and after shedding His own blood, to leave to His disciples no other weapon than that of the word. That which confers incomparable grandeur on the apostolic office, is that it is the noblest instrument of carrying on the work of Jesus, and that most in harmony with His spirit; it is a purely moral force, propagating the faith by persuasion alone; it is the truth unaided by any artificial and

* We shall explain in its place the famous text, "Thou art Peter."

† See on the development of the first institution of the Church, the first volume of my "Histoire des trois premiers Siècles de l'Eglise," pp. 312, 313; and Vol. II. chap. v.

material supports; it is, in short, the sword of the spirit wielded in the service of the God who is a Spirit.

We have only permitted ourselves to trace the outlines of the plan of Jesus; it will belong to the narrative itself to give colour to these general ideas. But before entering on this, we must show the character of His teaching and His miracles—the two principal methods of His operation.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. Subject of Christ's teaching.

WE shall consider separately the subject and the form of the teaching of Jesus. From both points of view it presents the character of the highest originality. That which we have said of His plan and of the central place He necessarily gives to Himself in its realisation, is a sufficient explanation of the fact that He Himself is the principal subject of His teaching. He is the Mediator between men and His Father; He not only reveals God, but He also unites man to God by the most real of all bonds, for His perfect obedience brings the two wills into absolute agreement. Everything, then, as we have shown, centres in His person. The first characteristic feature of His doctrine is, that it refers entirely to Himself. He claims not only adherence, but faith in Himself; no explanation, however ingenious, can lessen the significance of this fact. In this He is distinguished from all the teachers who preceded Him, whether philosophers or prophets. This is why He founded, not simply a school, but a Church; or, more properly speaking, a religion. This radical difference between Him and all His predecessors is expressed with rare precision in the prologue to the fourth Gospel; when, in reference to John the Baptist, the last and greatest of the seers, it is said: "He was not that light,* but was sent to bear witness of that light. That is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Jesus, then, is not the witness of the light, He is Himself the light.

* Οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, John i. 8.

He only has a right to say "I am the truth."* We shall see, by the very development of His teaching in the course of His life, what inexhaustible riches of knowledge of God, of mankind, of time and eternity, are comprised in that simple and sublime declaration. The incomparable power of His doctrine arises from this, that it is not so much a new idea as a new fact, or rather the true realisation of all man's dim and yearning anticipations. The ideas of reparation, of reconciliation, of divine and eternal life, were not strangers to mankind; least of all were they so to the people who possessed the holy oracles; but now for the first time they take form in a holy person, and are realised in the work of the Redeemer. Banish all which refers to Himself in Christ's words; reduce him to a mere master like Plato, or a prophet like Isaiah, and it is as if the Gospels were emptied of their meaning; the very substance of the doctrine is gone; there remains only a dry husk, a hollow, resounding shell: the teaching of Jesus is then nothing more than a tinkling cymbal; apart from a few gleams of original and popular wisdom, it can scarcely be exonerated from the charge of wearisome monotony. All that sublime mystery which has nourished the souls of saints in all time, is then rightly pronounced the most defective portion of His teaching. If He is not God, the divinest side of His doctrine becomes the most vulnerable. It can only subsist, if beneath it is felt the pulse of a life which is truly of God.

According to our conception of the incarnation and the voluntary humiliation which it implies, we do not ascribe omniscience to Jesus; He became subject to the law of development, consequently he did not possess, at the outset, all religious knowledge; he attained it progressively. Let us, however, while we admit this doctrine of His progressive development, carefully guard against confounding the relative imperfection of His religious knowledge with error. Infallibility in this province is a consequence of perfect holiness; for

* John xvi. 6.

religious error is associated with moral defectiveness. "Truth," says Schleiermacher, "is the natural heritage of man; his faculties, in their normal condition, ought to lead him to it. The state of ignorance or uncertainty is not error; the latter commences the moment the mind has arrived at a false conclusion; for, in order to do this, it must have stopped too soon in its search after truth, and, consequently, must either have been wanting in the love which truth deserves, or must have had a secret interest in accepting an incomplete result. It is not then possible to distinguish, absolutely, between error and sin; at least in relation to that order of truths which addresss themselves to the conscience and the soul."* If it is thus with man in his normal condition, with how much stronger reason may we attribute this infallibility to Jesus, who presents to us the highest ideal of humanity. With a mind upright and pure, He discerned religious truth as it was reflected in Holy Scripture, in nature, and, most of all, in Himself,—the most perfect mirror of things divine. All He needed, then, was to arrive at the full consciousness of His own being.

This infallibility need not, however, be extended beyond the sphere of religious truth. It would be taking away from Jesus the reality of His humanity to suppose that He possessed an intuitive knowledge of all the laws of physics, and did not share the current beliefs of His age as to natural phenomena. It would be childish to suppose that while He spoke of the setting sun, He held in mental reservation the theory of Galileo or of Newton. No, in all that belonged not to His mission, He was truly the man of His country and His age. Yet more, even in the things of religion He did not possess boundless knowledge. He Himself declares that the knowledge of times and seasons belongs exclusively to the Father.† The properly scientific portion of religion, that which comprehends questions of criticism, of chronology and ritual, did not come

* Schleiermacher, "Leben Jesu," p. 118.
† Acts i. 7.

within the scope of His immediate intuition. It follows that He was infallible only in the directly religious province of truth; this must be admitted without limitation or exaggeration. Assuredly, that which He came to teach the world, by the manifestation of Himself and the revelation of God, was a lesson so great that it cannot be necessary to overlay it with elements foreign to His mission. He did not come to reveal that which science could by herself discover, but to restore sight to those blind souls who have eyes only for earth, and to whom the inner and invisible world is closed.

II. The Form and Method of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

If, from the subject of Christ's teaching, we pass to its form and method, we cannot but recall that spontaneous declaration of His very enemies: "Never man spake like this man."* "Eloquence is a virtue," as has been justly said; provided always that by eloquence is understood, not the heated oratory which sways men only by inflaming their passions, but that higher art, which is the royal dominion of mind over mind, and which addresses itself to the noblest faculties of the human being. The most brilliant talent is insufficient to effect such a result; it cannot be accomplished short of the highest moral influence. The word eloquence, even in its loftiest acceptation, seems profane when applied to Jesus Christ, because it is always more or less associated with a carefulness about form, a desire for effect and love of glory. His peculiar eloquence is derived from the ascendancy of His moral perfection; it is His life transfused into His teaching; it is the constraining force of virtue, or rather of holiness. There is not a single distinctive feature of His doctrine which is not a manifestation of one of His moral qualities, so that His teaching, considered in its form and method, is still Himself; for His person constitutes its essential basis and its principal theme. Precisely herein appears the perfection of this teaching, for the more

* John vii. 46.

truly our words convey our thoughts and feelings, the more perfectly do they fulfil their mission. Who then, in this sense, ever spoke like Him beneath whose every utterance we feel, as it were, the throb of the compassionate heart which prompted it?

Whence comes that august calm which is impressed on all His discourses, and which makes us say as we listen, "It is the Lord?" Is it not from His perfect mastery of Himself; from the constant serenity and harmony of His whole being? Nothing in his teaching conveys the impression of elation or extraordinary excitement of feeling, because He is never beside Himself or above Himself; life in God is not with Him an exceptional state, a rapture of soul, an elevation attained rarely, and only under the extraordinary inspiration of some favoured hour; it is His habitual condition, therefore it does not reveal itself in Him as in the prophet, by burning words and bold metaphors, glancing with lightning flash through his discourses; it is manifested as a bright and gentle light proceeding from a flame burning steadily on the altar.

One most characteristic trait of the teaching of Jesus is its adaptation to the common people. No other master ever made Himself so accessible to the multitude, to the humblest and most ignorant, no less than to the greatest minds. Nor was this popularity purchased as popularity so often is, at the cost of truth. He pandered to none of the passions of His age; He made no concession to current errors. On the contrary, He never ceased for a day to combat the favourite ideas of the men of His generation, and to trample under foot the national prejudices of the Jews, commencing with their infatuated pride. He in no way accommodated Himself to their false conceptions; and when He is either accused or commended for having clothed immortal truths in the coarse garb of vulgar superstition, in order to bring them within the compass of His contemporaries, the judgment is contradicted by the best authenticated facts, and, most of all, by that noble and manly candour

which characterises all His discourses. It was, then, without any concession to the false morality of accommodation, that Jesus became the most popular of teachers. He was so from the same cause which endeared poverty to Him, by virtue of that natural affinity which exists between compassionate love and the most neglected and despised portion of mankind. He who made His dwelling among the poor, spoke for the ignorant, and for children. Thus, in the popular character of His teaching, we find the distinctive feature of His whole life, which is ever love stooping to save.

This popular form of teaching was an entire novelty. Not only in Judæa, but wherever mind had acquired a certain degree of culture, it asserted its aristocracy. The saying of the poet, *Odi profanum vulgus*, was the motto of the wise. Every philosophical school had its secret esoteric doctrine, communicated only to the initiated; in this practice there was as much prudence as pride. Under this shelter, the superstition of the masses might be safely despised without the risk of rousing their anger. The esoteric system had taken root in Jerusalem as in Athens and Rome. Religion, as we have seen, had become a thing of the schools; the rabbis had transformed it into a cold and complicated science; their contempt for the ignorant went to the length of the most sanguinary hate, as we may judge from the saying of the Pharisees, recorded in our Gospels, "This people which knoweth not the law are cursed."* These harsh words are but an echo of the malediction of the synagogue on the *Amhaarez*, an opprobrious name given to any one who held himself aloof from their school. "As well give one's daughter to a wolf as to an ignorant man. Such an one deserves to forfeit all his rights, to be refused all assistance, and to be passed by without recognition by any who meet him."† The excommunicated of the schools were the chosen

* Ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος ὁ μὴ γινώσκων τὸν νόμον ἐπικατάρατοί εἰσι (John vii. 49).

† Gfrœrer, "Das Jahrhundert des Heils," I., pp. 190, 191.

of Christ; He brought Divine truth to them in its simplicity and purity, and it was to them, according to the scriptural expression, as milk to the newborn babe. He was fully conscious of this new character of His teaching. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," He exclaims, "that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."* Assuredly, His words did not mean that there is any incompatibility between knowledge and the Gospel, but they did imply that the way to Jesus is not that of dialectics and erudition, or few would be able to walk in it. The best commentary on this sublime saying is the following passage from Tertullian, "I call thee, human soul, not such as thou art when thou hast been moulded in schools and polished in libraries. I seek thee simple and rude, untaught and ignorant as thou art found in those who have added nothing to nature. I go to seek thee on the highway, in the market place, in the workshop. I ask of thee only that which thou bringest originally to man, only that which thou hast thyself learned of thine author."† Thus the popularity of the teaching of Jesus arises primarily from its essentially human character.

The same cause explains its freedom from all technicalities; never was there more thoroughly lay teaching than His.‡ He does not sit in the seat of Moses, nor speak a sacred and learned tongue; He mixes with the people in the towns and country; the green summit of a hill, the side of a well, the market places, the fields where feed the flocks, are alike His pulpit and His text, and He draws lessons the most sublime from the commonest concerns of life. With a skilful hand He can engraft His teachings on to the disposition of His hearers; He discerns at a glance the point of contact between the spirits

* Ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις (Matt. xi. 25.)

† *Te simplicem et rudem et impolitam compello. Ea expostula qua tecum in hominem infero.* (Tertullian, "De Testimonio Animæ").

‡ Ewald, "Geschichte Volks Israels," V. pp. 215, 216.

He seeks to enlighten and His own exalted thoughts. No one knows so well as Jesus how to connect new truth with the old and familiar. Thus is He like the householder who brings forth out of his treasury things new and old.

No thought remains in His teaching vague and abstract; it is at once clothed in a body, and stands forth in bold relief, which makes it appreciable to the most unlearned. It has been observed with justice, that His discourses are coloured by His historical surroundings; that is what imparts to them that perpetual freshness, that seal of reality, which engraves them upon every memory. The commonest features of life in the towns and in the country, the wide and narrow gates, the platter made clean on the outside, salt, leaven,* the new and old pieces put into the worn garment, all assume a high significance in His teaching, and help to give it an original and picturesque turn. We are transported into the fields where the harvests whiten, where the herds graze, where the lily puts on, without effort of its own, a vesture richer than Solomon's purple. Family life in its various incidents furnishes new figures. There is the candle which lights all the house when the darkness has set in. The children are sleeping round the father, when he hears again and again at the door the importunate knock of his needy neighbour. At the midnight hour comes the thief.† Domestic festivals, the wedding with its oriental splendours, the birth of a child, and the joy that comes with it, all find place in these symbolical pictures.‡ Social relations are used with the same divine art. The slave, the journeyman, the miser, the son of the house appear, each with his peculiar features, in the sermons of Jesus.§ The king is enacting his rightful part, whether he goes to war or honours his guests with his presence. We see the rich man at his festal table robed in purple and fine linen, and the poor perishing with hunger at

* See Luke xiii. 18–24; xi. 39; Mark ix. 50; viii. 15.
† See Luke xii. 35; xi. 7; Matthew xxiv. 43.
‡ See Matthew xxv.; John xvi. 21.
§ See Luke xii. 45; xiv. 31; Matt. xxii. 11.

the threshold of the palace, and the captive sighing in his cell.*

Most popular then, because most unscholastic in its form, was the teaching of Jesus. We note this human character in the method which He employs for communicating truth. He always addresses man simply as man; He aims at the heart and conscience—that is at that which is deepest and most fundamental in the soul. He never addresses the man of a certain class, or a certain culture; He passes rapidly by the merely accidental and contingent, all the distractions of a day, that which may be called the changing vesture of the moral being, to act on the moral being itself. Hence the world-wide scope of His teaching; He lays His finger directly on the human heart, as it is found in every stage of culture and civilisation. It is just because it is accessible to the simple and the young that His teaching is universal as humanity. His depth is attributable to the same cause; there must be, in order to reach the child and the ignorant, a response to the true needs of human nature, to those which are the deepest and most imperative, and also the least readily satisfied; for it is the refined and cultivated mind which is most easily beguiled and amused. A child-like soul, upright and simple, is not so cheaply bought; that which is adapted for such an one is fit for mankind.

Thus everything in the teaching of Christ appeals to the conscience. He calls in its consent as a first essential. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."† Ye are the children of darkness, your deeds are evil, ye have need of the concealment of night. Therefore ye will not come unto me that ye might have light. What Jesus perpetually demands is repentance, conversion, the resolute turning of the will. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."‡ Thus that meek

* See Luke xvi. 19. On the real character of the teaching of Jesus, see Holzmann. ("Die Synopt. Evang." pp. 461–464.)
† John vii. 17. ‡ Matt. xi. 12.

and gentle teaching is in its essence also a sword, a messenger of war, and a divider of mankind. It will execute terrible judgments. "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you."* "Take heed how ye hear."† Jesus never disguises the consequences of a refusal to accept the truth; His merciful appeals have a terrible sanction.‡ Whoever rejects these seeds of eternal life, becomes like an accursed land bringing forth thorns and thistles.

The teaching of Christ, precisely on account of its moral character, could not carry the same evidence to all His hearers. Religious truth appeals to the sense of the divine, and to conscience; it cannot, therefore, find an immediate response in a fallen race, which is without exception under the influence of evil, only in different degrees. Truths of this order belong to the invisible world; they cannot, therefore, be discerned by those whose inward eye remains closed. Beside, these truths claim to reform and rule the life; it is impossible to accept them and at the same time to exclude the often stern obligations which flow from them. Thus they repel all whom they do not draw into subjection. The mind, skilful in self-deception, thinks its interest is engaged in disputing them. It requires an act of the will to enter into and receive teaching like that of Jesus; the truth which He brings to the world must be grasped at once by the heart and the intellect. Hence the reason why the most perfect of masters so soon encountered opposition.

It was not that He did not use all means to rouse and stimulate those moral powers, without which His doctrine remains a dead letter. If He did not set forth the truth at once in its fulness, it was because the human eye could not endure the sudden burst of the pure and dazzling light from heaven. He softened its glory and shaded it beneath a veil of transparent symbols, which had the advantage of awakening the attention of men, still too carnally minded to look in the face invisible realities. These symbols exciting a desire to dis-

* John xii. 48. † Luke viii. 18. ‡ See Matt. xi. 21, 22.

cover their hidden meaning, aroused the mind, and led men to make a salutary effort to grasp the truth. Such a view removes the difficulties which present themselves at first sight in the memorable conversation between Jesus and His disciples, as the end of His parables. The apostles questioning Him on the meaning of one of His similitudes, took their place in the first rank of the children of light, who seek to have their eyes opened. "Unto you," says the Master, "it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them which are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."* Let us not forget that the inner circle which gathered around Jesus was closed to none, and was composed of all those who, hungering and thirsting after truth, found in His words the first response to their panting desires, and showed by their eagerness to question Him, that the sense of the divine had awoke within them. None is excluded, but by his own fault or hardness of heart. How should men with eyes that will not see, participate in the blessings of salvation? Under such conditions, truth could not be communicated to them without degrading and materialising herself; it would be a reproach to her, were she as ready to disclose herself to a carnal heart at enmity with her, as to a humble and contrite spirit yearning after her. God makes "the day-spring from on high" to shine like His sun on the evil and the good: but the superiority of the moral over the physical light is manifest in this, that it enlightens only those who are willing to be enlightened. "If any man hath ears, let him hear. To him that hath shall be given. but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath."† In

* Ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσι, καὶ μὴ ἴδωσι (Mark iv. 12).

† Ὅς γὰρ ἂν ἔχῃ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ, καὶ ὃς οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει, ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. (Mark iv 25). See the noble remarks of Neander on the subject "Life of Christ," I. 145–148.

other words, divine truth finds no door of entrance where the conscience is asleep and the will feeble, and especially where the sense of the divine is deadened. And it can be preserved only on the same terms as it is acquired. To secure it, it needs to be perpetually reconquered; the slothful soul will soon lose even the lingering memory of it. Here again comes out the perfection of Jesus, which is inseparable from his moral perfection.

The Divine Master bore no resemblance to the doctors of tradition who sought to subdue all minds, and fashion them at their will. They required passivity in their disciples, and were satisfied if these repeated the lesson, learnt without adding anything to it. They treated the human soul as a parchment upon which they traced their thoughts, and were afraid of anything which might give indication of a living organ of truth, because in reality they were far more desirous of exalting themselves as the masters of the truth, than of exalting truth itself. They pursued selfish and interested ends; they were ambitious souls who could not endure that their disciples should grow up to the same height as themselves. There is nothing like this in Jesus. What He seeks is not His own glory and personal authority; He lives not for Himself, but for His disciples; He seeks to emancipate them and to raise them to a moral manhood. Therefore His method of teaching aims first of all to quicken heart and mind into fruitfulness, and to arouse the will to decision. He does not *impose* truth upon men, He *proposes* it to them, and sets no value on any but a voluntary adherence, which He nevertheless requires to be absolute and unreserved. In fine, moral authority is asserted as that which alone possesses a true and permanent ascendancy over man. A tradition learnt and imposed from without has no true influence, it is only a vain show, a dead letter. The conviction which springs from contact with Christ, and which grows in the soul like a living seed, under the combined action of the Holy Spirit and the human will, is called faith, and

becomes one of those beliefs for which men can suffer and die. A consenting will is then the only true security for authority, and Jesus seeks no other. Thus the Gospel tells us with great justice that He taught the people as one having authority, and not as the scribes,*—a bold and profound saying, which shows how the best organised system of traditional authority, one which in its proud scorn refused even to acknowledge the existence of the Gospel, must needs fall before moral authority, asserted with the largest regard to human freedom

Jesus displayed the richest variety in His teaching, in order to adapt it to every need of the heart and every grade of culture. In the synagogue where He spoke to the people assembled on the Sabbath day, He took His subject according to the wonted custom of the Jews, from the portion of Scripture which had been read for the day.† The Old Testament always occupied a large portion of his teaching.‡ It is impossible to estimate too highly His method of interpretation, infinitely superior to that of His first disciples, and entirely free from the influence of the rabbinical schools of the time. Nowhere do we find in His discourses, subtle contortion of texts, or multiplication of artificial analogies. Himself the living commentary of that old covenant which He came to fulfil, He sets in relief the one great thought which constitutes its unity. He shows how all tends to His own work, to His person, His sufferings and triumph. He constantly makes most happy use of the history of Israel; He is so perfectly master of the whole sacred literature that it weaves itself naturally into the thread of His discourse, and He breathes a fresh inspiration into it from His own life. "Never," says Ewald, "was there brought to the interpretation of the holy Scripture a deeper intuition, a more luminous discernment, a more penetrating intelligence.

* Matt. vii. 29. † Luke iv. 16–20.

‡ "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 8).

He always knew where to find that which was most striking, and to give it the most admirable application."*

Parable, as we have said, is one of the chosen forms of the teaching of Jesus. It is distinguished from apologue and fable, in that it is not a transposition of human actions into a region to which they do not belong, as to the animal or vegetable kingdom, but a picture, complete in itself, of some scene of social or working life, from which is evolved a great moral lesson or religious truth. The parable does not put words into the mouth of the wolf, the lamb, or the ant; it leaves natural objects as they are. Every agent brought forward acts conformably to the laws of his being. The similitude is to be taken as a whole, and not pressed in detail. Nature is full of tender and sublime symbolism. It is irradiated by the higher and ideal world; all human language is coloured by these reflections, for looked at closely it is but one perpetual metaphor; every spiritual idea is clothed in an image borrowed from the lower world. Who can appreciate better than Jesus these deep harmonies between the two worlds? He stood at the luminous focus whence all light proceeded. He is at home in the midst of nature and the revelations of Scripture, as in His Father's house. He is not one of the servants entrusted with a portion of the goods, he is the Son to whom all belongs. He has a royal understanding of nature and Scripture; it goes beyond mere knowledge, beyond poetry; it is a deep and divine intuition.

Jesus is pleased frequently to give point to His thought by casting it into the form of an aphorism, or a striking and original maxim. These sayings of His go deep into the mind like the sharp point of an arrow. Paradoxes are common in His discourses. How should it be otherwise? Is not all that He says, all that He does, a protest against the ordinary course of men's lives? Does He not come to change the centre, to

* Ewald, "Gesch. Volks Israels," V. p. 216, See also Holzmann, "Die Synopt.," p. 460; and Schleiermacher, "Leben Jesu," p. 264.

alter the pole? He who shows what love is by laying down His life for His brethren, cannot speak without coming in collision with all the prejudices and all the received ideas of a world ruled by selfishness and pride. What can be more absurd in current opinion than the idea of a man's losing his life to save it? And yet this principle embraces all Christianity and all the life of Christ.

In the discourses recorded in the synoptics, we find a great variety of tones and forms in the sayings of the Master. As Clement of Alexandria remarks, "The Saviour, in order to save man, employs all accents and gives infinite variety to His language. Now He threatens and warns, now He is wrath, now His pity melts in tears over all."* What a difference is there between the Sermon on the Mount and the anathemas hurled against the Pharisees. When He changes His hearers, as He does in passing from Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus necessarily varies His mode of address. His ministry, at its commencement, is a merciful call addressed to the scattered sheep of the house of Israel; at its close, before a proud and hypocritical hierarchy, it sounds like thunder from Sinai. It is ever perfect love, whether under the form of pity or of holy indignation, which cannot tolerate evil. We have already dwelt on the circumstances which explain the polemical and metaphysical tone of the discourses of Jesus in the fourth Gospel. They show the same spirit of adaptation, in form and substance, to the incidents of the time. The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves furnishes the theme of His profound discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum; He makes use in a similar way of the various ceremonies of the feast of Tabernacles. The allegory of the Good Shepherd recalls the most touching parables. If, in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, on the eve of His death, His words become sublime mystical utterances, can we marvel at it in such a moment and at such a farewell?

* Θρηνῶν ἰλαῖ. (Clem., "Protrept.," I. 8).

It would be a great misconception to compare the dialectics of Jesus with those of ordinary philosophy. Nothing has less affinity than His teaching with the chain of rigorous logic, which links thought to thought in a close series. Jesus constantly suppresses the intermediate links, because He knows intuitively those depths of the human soul, where intertwine the fibres of moral being, and surveys them from the height where all truths unite, like divergent lines at an extreme point of elevation. This in no way detracts from the clearness of His teachings, which habitually take a direct and popular form.

Whether, then, we consider His teaching in its subject, its form, or its method, it presents the same invariable aspect of perfection. There have been only two men who have ever known how, in any degree, to speak that living language which appeals to all. The most popular teachers of mankind, next to Jesus, have certainly been Socrates—at least the Socrates of Xenophon—and Luther; the first laid aside all false formality, and dared to take the text of his lessons from the incidents of common life; the second might have said with reason that the heart of the common people beat with his, for he gave form to its thought and possessed the art of those bright and pithy sayings, which become household words. But without dwelling on the inadequacy of the best philosophy of the ancients, and without recalling all the imperfections of the great reformer, we ask who would dare for a moment to compare the uncertain and often frigid teachings of Socrates, or the impetuous torrent of Luther's speech, to the words of Jesus, as we have described them? In this respect, as in every other, He stands alone.



JESUS did not limit
also worked mira
often attempted, to s
which concur equally i
miracles form, indeed, a
appealed to them as the
words are closely conn
He performed; the mir
discourses, and form t
miracles are intertwined,
narrative, and, except by
narrative they must be a
then, a vain attempt to se
of wisdom and him who
miracles are false or fabu
on them lose all authorit
explanation, which attribu
involuntary connivance in
According to this theory

that he must have played more than once the part of a common magician, if we may not say impostor.*

This explanation shatters itself on the rock of an inevitable contradiction; for, if Jesus was Himself deceived as to the line of demarcation between the natural and supernatural order of things, He was under no necessity to practise the convenient system of pious frauds. As to the first point, it is certain that He always perfectly recognised the marked distinction between the ordinary course of events and the exceptional manifestations of divine power. This is abundantly evident from the manner in which He appeals to His miracles as the attestation of His mission. Upon the second point—that veiled imputation of imposture, so much the more perfidious that it assumes the garb of eulogy—we can enter into no discussion. The spirit which confesses in Jesus the Holy One of God, the great and solemn Witness of the truth, repels with indignation the charge, and still more the apology. The moral sense is not different in the East and the West; under every sky it condemns falsehood, and cannot suffer without a shudder the casting of such a blemish on the purest moral image the world has ever seen.

The school of fable has been constrained to have recourse to these dubious subtleties; it commenced by the negation of all miracles, but its position has become less easy, since criticism has come to an almost unanimous conclusion, that our three first Gospels must have appeared between the years 70 and 80. We will not dwell on the strange modifications of the sacred story, by which it has been attempted to reduce the miraculous action of Jesus Christ to a mere moral influence. This can only be done by rejecting all the facts which absolutely refuse to lend themselves to such an interpretation—the miracles, for instance, wrought on inert nature;† and even the other miracles

* See the slight and curious chapter on the *miracles* in M. Renan's "Vie de Jésus," p. 255.

† This is the great gap in Schleiermacher's "Life of Jesus." He admits only the cures, attributing them to the moral action of the

need to be capriciously handled to fit the hypothesis. We shall not pass in review again the general principles which lead us to admit the possibility of the supernatural; we have not now to treat the question in the abstract, but only in its application to the ministry of Jesus, enquiring what was the aim, and what the character of His miracles.

Let us, first of all, make a distinction between a miracle and a prodigy. A prodigy is only a manifestation of power, an astonishing fact, which arrests the attention, and elicits admiration and amazement quite apart from its moral character. Clearly, it has no religious value; it appeals to the eye, and not to the heart and conscience; it cannot serve to establish either a divine mission or a new truth, for evil itself may have extraordinary manifestations, and we read in Scripture of prodigies aiding and abetting error. Besides, if power belongs to God, it is but one of His attributes; it is not in *it* that we must seek the essence of His being, since that is pre-eminently holiness and love. The greatest displays of power would not truly reveal Him. Hence the sterility of prodigy left to itself. The Jews, in their carnality and earthliness of mind, sought after a sign, and demanded it urgently of Jesus; and, had He satisfied them, they would have worshipped Him, or, rather they would have hailed in Him the gratification of their most cherished ideas. Therefore He always refused the miracles they asked so eagerly. To the Pharisees seeking of Him a sign from heaven, He replied that there should no sign be given them, but the sign of the prophet Jonas, whose very appearance was in itself a miracle in a city corrupt as Nineveh.* It follows that a miracle is not a mere prodigy; it implies a manifestation of holiness and love. It is a sign, a revelation of the invisible; it is designed to raise those who witness it,

Redeemer. As to the instances of resurrection of which the Gospel speaks, he supposes death to have been only apparent ("Leben Jesu," pp. 205-220). M. Schenkel has carried these explanations to the point of absurdity.

* Luke xi. 29, 30.

from the merely external to the higher and moral sphere; it is, in fine, a *work*, and it is by this name that Jesus most frequently designates it.* A work implies the development of moral activity; it is the manifestation not only of a particular force, but of the worker himself. "The works that I do," said Jesus, "they bear witness of me."† Each individual miracle is, then, a revelation of the Saviour, a reflex of His moral perfection, a sensible expression of His character. Jesus is Himself the great miracle, for He represents at its culminating point, the saving and special intervention of Divine love for the redemption of the world. He breaks the chain of natural causes and effects, to make a new beginning. He is the incarnation of redeeming love; and we recognise in Him the supreme manifestation of the pity of the Father, remedying the ruin of the fall. Particular miracles are only emanations from this living and central miracle.

Peculiarly, by the simple fact that they are the suspension of natural laws, miracles denote the extraordinary character of the mission and work of Jesus; they mark Him as the great Ambassador of God, who restores the kingdom of heaven with power; the special and local supernatural springs from the general and permanent supernatural element of the work of redemption. Then the very manner in which Jesus performs His miracles bears witness of the condition of lowliness and abasement to which He had voluntarily stooped; He does not directly assert divine power; He asks it as a communication from His Father; He prays before healing the sick, and raising the dead; and the lifting up of His eyes to heaven testifies that He has come down from heaven, and has lowered Himself to the level of finite and human existence. Lastly, He never works wonders for Himself, for His own glory or well-being; He who could multiply the loaves to feed hungry thousands,

* There is a clear distinction to be observed between τέρας (*portentum*) and σημεῖον, ἔργον.

† Αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ, μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ (John v. 36).



no miracles for Him
poor paralytic bring
blind beggar sitting
tender healing, on th
and, with one sovere
weeping over his bie
compassionate love;
and make a yet mo
consciences of those
power, claiming the s
less analogy with the
Does any one questio
the wild romance wh
magician of antiquity,
has been compared
without the aid of ma
narratives, to place the
Only one thing was fo
holy sobriety and the
miracles of Jesus. O
and scenic, designed o
on the other, the work
unreserved bestowment

The miracles of

gainst miracles wrought at a distance, such as the of the centurion's servant.* The free intervention of power to suspend, for a religious object, the laws of once admitted, all these difficulties disappear. The sses of miracles differ, however, as to the manner of complishment. Nature can offer no resistance to God: assive before Him. It is otherwise with the moral ; he cannot be dealt with like inert matter, even in e of a mere temporal deliverance. He must, to a degree, concur in the miracle. Not that the disposition soul, even when formed under the influence of the of Jesus, is ever the effective cause of the cure: in cases it may contribute to it, but always in a low degree. ervous maladies, the state of the mind influences the here can be no real connection between the cure of ss, deafness, or leprosy, and an act of faith and ion. Yet, without this act of submission and faith, would not have taken place: faith is not the cause, condition of healing. Thus a miracle possesses a moral character, for it creates a holy relation between no works it and the subject of it.

miracles of Jesus proceeded, then, always from a super- power, even on the rare occasions when He made use outward medium for their accomplishment. No one ntain that when He anointed the eyes of the blind man little moistened clay, and sent him to wash in the pool am, or when He laid His hands on the sick, these acts themselves enough to produce effects so marvellous. imary design of miraculous cures was to awaken the fter moral healing. Physical evil, without being in each ual case correlative to particular guilt, as Jesus affirms, sition to the prejudices of His disciples,† is none the

auss, in his "Life of Jesus," has made a nomenclature of the s, trying to establish a sort of progression in the absurd.
an ix. 2.

less the consequence of moral evil. It would not exist but for sin; it is its bitter fruit and punishment. Sickness, which is the precursor of death, re-echoes the sentence of condemnation under which the race of Adam lies. By His healing power, Jesus showed that He was come to triumph over evil in all its forms; if He assailed it first in its visible consequences, it was to prepare those whom He relieved for a greater deliverance; thus He never failed to remind the sufferers who sought His aid, that bodily evil was as nothing compared with that of the soul, and at once to offer them pardon. "Go and sin no more" was the conclusion of all His miracles.

II. The healing of the demoniacs.

One of the maladies which Jesus most frequently relieved was that mysterious visitation of possession, which raged at this period with great intensity, and attacked body and soul at once. It has been denied that it presented any extraordinary character, because it was accompanied with symptoms which are common to all ages, such as epileptic seizures, mental alienation, morbid excitement of the nervous organism, deafness, and paralysis.* We do not question that ordinary madness bears some resemblance in these respects to possession. It is certain that possession grafted itself in some way on to madness, and that, in order to its development, it required certain moral and physical predispositions. But it is not a sufficient explanation of the strange phenomenon described in our gospels, to represent it as the simple effect of popular superstition acting upon the diseased in the shape of a fixed idea. We cannot admit that Jesus would have carried accommodation to an erroneous belief so far as to speak of devils as He has spoken, if their influence had nothing to do with this terrible malady. It is of no avail to bring forward the manner of treating the

* This is the erroneous opinion of Neander, "Life of Christ," V. 1. It is set aside by Luke x. 20, where the gift of casting out evil spirits is recognised in the disciples.

insane, which commences by entering into the delusion of the sufferer with a view to his cure, and which does not acknowledge the obligation of truthfulness towards the unhappy individual, for whom words have no longer their proper value. Jesus spoke to the demoniacs in the presence of His disciples and fellow countrymen. Now He could not have lawfully used this language if He had not shared the opinion of His contemporaries. This opinion then was, at least in part, true.

The Gospel does not stand alone in the mention of cases of possession. Josephus speaks of them repeatedly, while explaining them altogether erroneously. He sees in the demons, the wandering souls of the wicked, and affirms that they were cast out by pronouncing over the possessed particular forms of words taken from the books ascribed to Solomon, and by making the sufferers inhale certain medicinal herbs.* Let us leave these gross superstitions; they do not touch the fact itself. We find traces of it in heathen nations: St. Paul, at Philippi in Macedonia, cured an unhappy slave who was the victim of evil spirits.† There is no reason why the same general causes, which had prepared the way for the outbreak of this evil in Judæa, should not have equally propagated it elsewhere. These possessions cannot possibly be identified with the sacred frenzy, the religious madness of the Pythonesses, because it is well-known that this was brought on at will, and it was regarded by the Greeks as an intervention of the divinity, not as the influence of evil spirits. Why not admit that in this critical age, which saw the close of a world, a new and strange form of evil was called forth? or at least that madness then assumed a terrible and exceptional character? This complication the Gospel explains by possession, and Jesus confirmed this explanation by His words and acts. To a believer in the

* The principal passage in Josephus upon demoniacs is found in "Bell. Jud" VII. 6, 3.

† See Acts xvi. 16, 17. Justin confirms the fact. "Dial. cum Tryph.," I.



wnose mind is alread
as well as metaphys
There is no reason a
of exceptional mental
of a foreign influenc
and bound.

In magnetic pheno
absolute subjection th
own thoughts, and st
freedom. There is a
session of the sick man
power. The audible v
by him; he is no more
his whole being is at th
Hence his extraordinar
blasphemous violence.
compared to transcende
to one devil or to many
case. It is supposed
strange influence on son
dom of darkness, from
invisible and intangible
upon unhappy beings, r
by a diseased condi-

aled them, not by vain exorcism, but by a word of power banished the evil spirit, and restored the equilibrium of ɔral being. It is plain that others tried like Him to cure ssessed: the Pharisees made it their endeavour, as He f admits.* It is possible that in certain cases the word ı and piety may have had some success, but these cures ıave been very imperfect and precarious, judging from ımber of demoniacs brought to Christ. Evidently He was able to work an effectual cure. No miracles came directly than these within the scope of His mission of which was in its sum and substance, a triumphant con- th the power of evil.†

ɜut if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons em out?" (Matt. xii. 27).

review of the whole discussion on the subject of demoniacs ɜ seen in the "Biblisches Realwœrterbuch" of Winer, who ins the naturalistic opinion, and in Ebrard's article in 's "Real Encyclopædie." See also Lange's "Leben Jesu," 285.

First Period of t



PUBLIC MINISTRY OF RETURN TO GALILEE A OF ROME (780–782).

WE divide the minist are closely connect of His public life the yo Messiahship, but the reve the severer aspects of H it excites at first but slig Jesus makes Himself kn founder of a spiritual ki Messiah looked for by sympathy is perceptibly

* I bear in mind in m Renan, Strauss, Schenkel.

unaccompanied with hatred, is the result of the first period of His ministry. The second is an open contest with the chiefs of the nation, the principal scene of which is the holy city. Lastly comes the inevitable close, shame and death, but also the eternal victory in the seeming defeat. Corresponding with the development of unbelief in the mass of the Jewish people, is the growth of faith and love in the small circle of the disciples of Jesus. While the Master is combating degenerate Judaism, He is forming the first nucleus of the Church, which will, at the appointed time, sever itself gradually from the bonds of the synagogue and communicate to the world the results of its work.

The holy life of Jesus bears, from its commencement to its close, a redemptive character, because it is one long sacrifice of obedience and love. Human life is thus restored to its normal condition; thenceforward the bitter consequences of the fall freely accepted, are transformed into acts of reparation; wherever the first Adam introduced rebellion, the Son of man, the head of the new race, substitutes entire submission and perfect holiness: He brings reconciliation out of the punishment itself; for, while we who have merited it must needs endure it, He voluntarily accepts it, and submits Himself to it, thus raising it to the height of a holy sacrifice. He thus restores the harmony between God and man, and re-unites the moral link which was broken at the fall. Therefore, that which is of highest import in the ministry of Jesus is neither the contest with His enemies, nor even the education of His apostles, but His life itself—that human life, like that of other men, save for the defilement of sin, but transformed into one continual sacrifice. "My meat and my drink," He said, "is to do the will of him that sent me."* This is the motto and the epitome of His whole career.

This principle of obedience, which is the comprehensive motive of His ministry, is not manifested only by His

* Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν, ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με (John iv. 34.)

acceptance of suffering and death, but also by His constant readiness to follow, day by day, and, as it were, step by step, the directions of Providence. He will neither hasten nor retard the hour for which He came—the hour in which His sacrifice was to be consummated; He Himself might be regarded as the first to apply the principle: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Nothing is more heroic than patience like this; it is that absolute self-renunciation, which does not wait to be called forth by great crises, but colours the whole life.

His ministry bears the seal of unity. The simple statement of facts dispels, as a poetical illusion, the whole hypothesis which has been fancifully built up as to His first appearances in Galilee. Nowhere, in reality, do we find any trace of that pastoral, coarse in spite of its poetical adorning, which is said to have been once enacted on the flowery shores of the sea of Tiberias. We shall see that He, over whose very cradle swooped a murderous sword, never ceased to awaken hatred. No doubt, His day of labour had its dawn and its noon, before it set in blood; but even the morning sky was red with the precursive signs of the storm. As soon as He opens His lips, He words are by turns gentle and severe. The fire which He lights upon earth does not simply kindle adoration; it is a consumer of evil. It was enough for it to appear in the midst of mankind to trouble it to its depths, and to give rise to the most absolute contradictions. This is the sign of His power, and of the solemn sublimity of His ministry. From the first day to the last, love and hate grow and strengthen side by side: in place of an unaccountable change in his character and modes of thought, transforming Him from a fair David into a fierce Goliath, we have a continuous progression; the laws of spiritual sequence without which the unity of His personality would be destroyed, are inviolably maintained.

I. Political condition of Judæa.

Let us recall, in a few outlines, the political situation of Judæa at the exact moment when Jesus appeared before His countrymen. The shadow of independence, which had been left to it under the vassal kingdom of Herod the Great, had long vanished. Augustus had annexed Judæa to the Roman Empire, not by making it one of those senatorial provinces governed by proconsuls, but as a direct dependent on his authority. He associated it with the government of Syria, the capital of which was Antioch, the residence of the imperial legate. In consequence, however, of its importance, and the difficulties presented by the complete subjection of such a people, the *procurator* of Judæa enjoyed a certain latitude in his administration; he at the same time managed the affairs of Samaria, but as a second department, distinct from the first. Faithful to the wise policy which it had pursued with so much success for centuries, Rome interfered as little as possible with the usages and institutions of the conquered province. The Sanhedrim was, therefore, allowed to continue side by side with the procurator, but its power was necessarily very limited. Its jurisdiction was confined to matters of religion and small civil causes: the procurator alone had the right of decreeing capital punishment. The high-priestly office had lost much of its importance. The Asmoneans and Herods had reduced it to a subordinate magistracy, of which they made a tool for their own purposes. Herod the Great had constituted himself guardian of the sacerdotal vestments, under pretext that he had had them restored to their first magnificence, on the Levitical model; he bestowed them only on the men of his choice. The Romans hastened to follow his example, and thus to keep in their hands an office which might become perilous to them.

The procurator of Judæa resided at Cæsarea. He only came to Jerusalem for the solemn feasts, or in exceptional cases, to administer justice. His prætorium stood near the citadel of Antonia. The Roman garrison in the whole of

Palestine did not exceed one legion. The levying of imposts on movable property, and on individuals, led to perpetual difficulties; no such objection was raised to the tribute of two drachms for the temple, which was levied by the Sanhedrim. The taxgatherers in the service of the Romans were regarded as the representatives of a detested rule; thus the publicans—for the most part Jews by birth—were the objects of universal contempt. The first rebellion of any importance took place on the occasion of the census under Cyrenius.

At the period at which we have arrived, Judæa was governed by Pilate, the third procurator since the annexation to the empire; he had found in the high-priestly office John surnamed Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas, the son of Seth, who had for a long time filled the same office under Valerius Gratus. Pilate had an ally rather than a rival in the Sadducee Caiaphas, who acted on no higher principle than the interest of his order, and the maintenance of his power. Pontius Pilate was wanting in the political tact which knows how to soften in form the severities of a foreign rule; he was a man of vulgar ambition, or, rather, one of those men without patriotism, who think only of using their authority for their own advantage. He took no heed of the peculiar dispositions and aversions of the people whom he was to govern. Thus he sent to Jerusalem a Roman garrison with standards; the Jews regarded this as a horrible profanation, for the eagles were worshipped as gods. Assailed in his prætorium at Cæsarea by a suppliant crowd, which no violence could disperse, the procurator was compelled to yield to prayers, which might soon be changed into desperate resistance. From that moment his influence was gone in Judæa; he compromised it still further when he caused shields of gold, bearing his name engraved beside that of the emperor Tiberias, to be suspended from the outer walls of the citadel of Antonia. This flattery to the sovereign, which might have been unaccompanied with peril elsewhere, was received at Jerusalem as a gratuitous provocation, and he was obliged to

recall a measure, persistence in which would have led to a terrible tumult. Having thus made himself an object of general aversion, he could not even do good without danger: his plan to build an aqueduct, a thing peculiarly needed on the burning soil of Judæa, created opposition so violent, that it could only be put down by force. Under such a governor, the national passions were in a perpetual state of agitation. This increase of patriotic fanaticism created great obstacles to a purely spiritual work like that of Jesus.*

Gaulonitis, Peræa, and Galilee still belonged, at this time, to the family of Herod. The tetrarch Philip governed the north-west of the country for thirty-seven years, and was distinguished for his moderation. He built the town of Banias, or Cæsarea-Philippi, near the sources of the Jordan, and also Bethsaida Julias, on the eastern shore of the Lake. Galilee and Peræa were the portion of Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist. His divorce from the daughter of Aretas, after his marriage with Herodias, his brother's wife, had brought war upon the wide provinces which he governed. He was about soon to undergo a humiliating defeat. Like his brother, he was childless. Under the influence of such a prince, surrounded by a licentious court, evil propensities had free play, and the corruption of manners was a bad preparation for a religion of purity and self-denial. In the lowness of the times, the Herods, though of the family of the vile despots who had sold the independence of the Jews, were regarded as in some measure a national dynasty. They had a party which bore their name, and which, in religious matters, combined, after the example of Herod the Great, Pharisaism and Sadduceeism.

Such were the political circumstances in the midst of which Jesus was placed. They contributed, no doubt, to bring about the catastrophe which terminated his career; but great as was the tyranny which oppressed Judæa, it did not resemble the administrative despotism of modern times. In this all is pre

* See Ewald (vol. I., pp. 10–55).

vention; the system of legal provisions checks all original, new, and energetic action. On the contrary, in the old world, in those lands of the sun where external life expands so freely, great liberty of action is enjoyed up to the day of terrible and final repression; the masses may be freely addressed without an accorded, and consequently limited, right; toleration is large, even if tyranny is great and redoubtable. There is no security under such an arbitrary government; but so long as no particular cause awakens distrust, there are fewer bonds in such a state of society than in one of softer manners, but encaged in the network of universal prescription.*

II. Commencement of the ministry of Jesus.

The ministry of Jesus commences with His return from the desert, after the temptation; but, careful to follow the direction of Providence, he does not wholly emerge from private life till an iniquitous captivity has brought to a close the preaching of His Forerunner. Even then, the circle of familiar disciples is small, but among them He reveals Himself without reserve, and acts openly as Messiah.

We have seen that John the Baptist greeted Jesus, as he returned from the wilderness, with these words: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." This saying brought to Christ His two first disciples. One was Andrew, the son of Jonas; the other, who, with the reserve of holy love, does not name himself, was John, the son of Zebedee. The words exchanged between them were brief and simple: "Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see."† After this short dialogue, they went back no more to the Baptist—the end of their life was attained—the triumphant "Eureka" of Archimedes burst from their joyful

* See my "Histoire des trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise," vol. III., p. 24. M. Renan makes some very just reflections on this subject in his "Vie de Jésus."

† John i., 38, 39.

hearts. "We have found the Messiah," said Andrew to his brother Simon the day after this interview.* The aspect of Jesus was even more impressive than His words. We have no description of His countenance, but we know that it was radiant with holiness and love. The inward light, which lighteth every man, shone in His face: nothing is so telling as that involuntary and spontaneous expression of the moral life. The pure gaze of Jesus went down to the depths of the conscience; it was enough for Him to turn and look upon a poor sinner to break his heart.† Simon, the son of Jonas, felt the power of that glance from the first day, when he was brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew. The Master discerned immediately the distinctive features of that strong character. "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone,"‡ said He to the son of Jonas. Under the rough exterior of the young Galilean boatman, Jesus marked the spirit of hardy zeal which, purified by contact with Himself, would fit him for his great initiative mission among the apostles. These words in no way convey an official primacy; their character is entirely a moral one, for the positive institution of the apostolic office did not take place till long afterwards. Before making apostles, Jesus wished to make disciples. The first impression received by these young men was ineffaceable, but it needed to be confirmed; thus we shall find them returning to their ordinary occupations; for this first call must be carefully distinguished from the definitive call which they afterwards received. They were already, no doubt, sincerely attached to Jesus, and might call themselves His disciples,§ but they were not yet ripe for the exceptional vocation to which they were destined. ||

* Εὑρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (John i. 41).

† "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter: and Peter went out and wept bitterly."

‡ Σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς (John i. 43).

§ John ii. 2.

|| These observations do away with all the contradictions between the fourth Gospel and the synoptics, which give us a very different

To this small, scarcely-formed group, two men soon voluntarily joined themselves. The first, the countryman and friend of the Galilean who had followed John the Baptist, was Philip of Bethsaida. He, like them, was waiting for "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."* Arrested by a sovereign word of the carpenter of Nazareth, who was as yet to him only the son of Joseph, he in his turn exclaimed, "I have found Him." A missionary, as soon as a disciple, he carries the great news to another countryman, Nathanael of Cana, who was on his way back to his own city. He had already perceived the dawn of the new day; he was a man of pious expectation and holy desire, "an Israelite indeed." The Master saw him, as, according to the habit of the time, he was reading the Scripture under one of the fig-trees which bordered the road to Cana.† He knew that this was to Nathanael one of the hallowed hours of life. "When thou wast under the fig tree," said He, "I saw thee." These simple words, which contained, no doubt, an allusion to the most sacred secret of His soul, brought Nathanael to the feet of Jesus; he forgot the humble origin of the Messiah, which had for an instant staggered him; the poor hamlet of Nazareth vanished from his eyes before the glorious vision of heaven, opened by the Son of man, and brought down to earth by the mystic ladder, which Jacob had beheld in his dream at Bethel.‡ He was destined subsequently to take his place among the Apostles, under the name of Bartholomew.§ Jesus rejoined His mother at

account of the calling of the apostles (Matt. x.; Mark iii. 13–19; Luke vi. 12–16). The synoptics only relate the final call; to John, the great day is that, on which he for the first time saw Jesus. The spiritual fact eclipses to him the official.

* John i. 46.

† It was a Jewish custom for the traveller to read the holy Scriptures under the shade of wayside trees.

‡ John i. 51.

§ The identity of Nathanael and Bartholomew is proved first by the fact that Bartholomew is always placed next to Philip in the list of the apostles. (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 14); and

Cana,* in the house of a friend, where a wedding was being celebrated. Mary, who had faithfully kept in her heart the great memories of Bethlehem, and who was not unapprised of the solemn scene at Jordan, was ardently impatient to see her Son inaugurate His kingdom with power. Thus she seized the first opportunity that presented itself to ask a miracle of Jesus. The wine ran short at the feast, and she thought to repay, on a magnificent scale, the hospitality she had received under that roof. She desired a miracle for the glory of her Son, and also for the satisfaction of her own maternal heart. Such motives must needs be set aside. Mary learns with what a seal of severity her relations will henceforward be marked with Him, whom she bore in her bosom; she has to prove how much a great mission costs to natural affection. Thus her heart begins to feel the point of the sword which is to pierce it through. If no mother was ever so happy and blessed as Mary, none ever suffered more from the terrible exigencies of such a mission as that of Jesus. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" said He, "Mine hour is not yet come." In other words—It is not for thee to direct Me; I obey only a sign from My Father; the hour of outward glory for which thou dost fondly look is still far distant. Jesus set aside the human impulse to the miracle; the miracle itself He did not withhold. Wrought as it was in the midst of a small circle, and in private, it was well adapted to produce a divine assurance in the hearts of His disciples, without exciting their national hopes. It serves us to mark the difference between Jesus and the Baptist. The Forerunner spoke only of austerity and sadness, because

and by John xxi. 2. "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples."

The Cana of the Gospel is not *Kefer Kena*, situated at two hours' distance from Nazareth, but *Kana el Djelil*, or Cana of Galilee, three leagues to the north-east of Nazareth. We have in the ancient Arab designation a confirmation of the Gospel text. (Tobler, "Palestine," p. 130).

his mission was to preach repentance. He who brings salvation to the world does not dry the spring of holy tears, but He adds an element of joy and gladness: He speaks not only of death to self, but of new life.*

After a short stay at Capernaum, where He wrought several miracles,† Jesus repaired to the holy city to keep the feast of the Passover, always accompanied by the young Galileans who had attached themselves to His person His first public act was an open protest against the profanation of the sanctuary. Men saw in Him a new Pharisee, a devotee eaten up with zeal for the house of God.‡ No doubt it was lawful that the victims required for sacrifice might be bought in the proximity of the temple. It was also needful to have recourse to the money changers, that the two *denarii* levied for the charge of the altar might be paid in Jewish money, free from any approach to forbidden images. But instead of confining themselves to that which was strictly necessary, the venders had opened a noisy market. It was not wonderful that the court was given up to mercenaries, when the sanctuary had became the harbour of religious cupidity, and worship itself was turned into a means of trading, by men eager for power or credit. When the spiritual portion of the service was profaned to such a degree, what could be expected of the material? Jesus, in chastising these gross abuses, inaugurated a work of reformation, which in its progress would soon attack the hypocritical solemnities of the Temple. Taking a whip of small cords, He drives out the buyers and sellers, and overthrows the tables of

* The mythical explanation of Strauss, which sees in this miracle a counterpart of that of Elisha when he healed the waters of the spring, will not bear examination. There is no analogy between the two.

† This is proved by the words of Nicodemus, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John iii. 2); and the request of the inhabitants of Nazareth, when He abode in that city, that He would do the same works they had heard done at Capernaum (Luke iv. 23).

‡ John ii. 17. Compare Numb. xxv. 11–13.

the money-changers. "Take these things hence," He exclaims, in words of stern rebuke, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."* His very tone indicates His right to speak such royal words. This majestic and sudden expression of righteous anger strikes all the beholders with awe. The chiefs of the hierarchy alone are unmoved by the general feeling; their only thought is how they may defend themselves against this rising influence. The representatives of external authority never belie themselves. Even when the most incontestable moral power asserts itself before their eyes, they still demand an official warrant for its operation. "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" It does not befit the dignity of Jesus to give them a direct reply; by a bold enigma He asserts His truly divine right to reform the abuse of religion. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."† In other words, continue to destroy by your sins the worship, which has as its visible centre this sanctuary of stone; I will build up the true faith in three days by my resurrection. In reality, the Jewish religion fell to the ground on that day when He whom it set forth by so many types and ceremonies, was put to death by its adherents. Thenceforward the Temple was as nought; it was an empty monument; spiritually it was overthrown. By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus brought from the tomb the definitive religion of the world, and thus He rebuilt the true sanctuary. This saying went far beyond the comprehension of those who heard it, but Jesus no less truly asserted His prerogative by this appeal to what the future would declare. He could not more strongly vindicate His mission as a reformer than by testifying to the Jews of the Decline, that they were destroying their own religion, while He alone was capable of restoring the worship of the true God.

* John ii. 16.

† *Λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον, καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν* (John ii. 19.)

Many of the beholders of this scene were vividly impressed by it; but between transitory impression and a true faith the difference is great, as none knew better than Jesus.* Towards evening, however, a learned doctor, a member of the Sanhedrim, named Nicodemus, was seen coming into the house to which Jesus had retired. The deportment of the young teacher had filled this ruler with admiration; that which he had heard of His miraculous power inclined him to think that here must be a prophet indeed. But he dared not compromise his dignity by an open interview with the Galilean. Therefore he came to Jesus in secret. His excessive prudence showed that he was as yet but little prepared to sacrifice to truth the advantages of his position; this tenacious clinging to his privileges was a veil over his eyes. Jesus, therefore, according to His wont, replied less to the question of the Pharisee than to his secret thoughts: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He, the doctor revered and consulted, believes himself to have reached the highest stage of the religious life, and to be of all persons the most capable of receiving new revelations. So far from this, the new teacher tells him he has not even eyes to see. Nicodemus would not have been staggered by the mention of a new birth, if the words had been addressed to one of those Gentiles who knocked daily at the gate of the synagogue, and who were bound to break with all their past life. But the mystery is how a member of the Sanhedrim can be placed in the same rank with such. He does not hesitate to interpret the words of Jesus in a gross and material sense. How can an old man be born again? "Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" He would rather turn the thought of his interlocutor into ridicule, than admit for an instant that such a man as he could be a stranger to the kingdom of heaven. It is not the first time that pride has led to spiritual dulness. "Verily, verily I say unto you," is the reply of Jesus,

* John ii. 25.

"except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven: that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* In order to penetrate into the region of the divine, a new sense is necessary. The baptism of John prepares for this new birth, but more is needed yet,—even the supernatural operation of the Spirit, by which the soul is born to the life divine. His mysterious influence is like that of the wind;† invisible, it is yet real. The sceptical interrogations of the Pharisee, Jesus meets by his own testimony; he asks the less, Jesus gives the greater; he seeks to know how effects so amazing can be produced among men on earth, Jesus opens to his view the heavenly horizon. He himself comes down from that celestial region, whose fruitful influences on earth He has been describing. When He speaks of heaven He speaks of that which He has seen, for He is the Son. And now He is about to be lifted up before men, as was the serpent of brass in the wilderness. This lifting up, which is in truth the sacrifice of Himself, will save all who look on it in faith, for God has given His Son to the world, that whosoever believeth in Him might be saved. A great and terrible gift! The secrets of all hearts are to be revealed by the mere appearance of Christ, for there will be no difficulty in distinguishing those who love the light and those who seek to bury their evil deeds in darkness. Let us not forget that while Jesus spoke thus of the invisible world, the glory of that world itself perceptibly irradiated His whole being. He was Himself the living commentary on His discourses. In converse with a scholar and man of learning, He could not speak in the same tones as to the ignorant multitude. He produced His credentials as the Master of divine wisdom, and He brought them from the highest heaven

* Τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς, σαρξ ἐστι· καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστι (John iii. 6).

† Such is the connection of thought in this wonderful discourse (John iii. 1–21).

for He had learned with His Father the things which He spoke unto men.

III. Return of Jesus into Galilee. Meeting with the Samaritan woman. First public preaching.

During several months, Jesus yet remained in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, rather carrying on the preparatory work of John the Baptist than commencing His own. We have already noticed the noble testimony given to Him by the Forerunner, on the occasion of the baptism administered by the disciples of Jesus. The Pharisaic party, irritated against Him since the scene in the Temple, began to manifest their opposition, in a manner which decided Jesus to return into Galilee. He was confirmed in His resolution by the news of the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Jesus chose to go through Samaria; this road is particularly barren as far as Bethel, where it reaches the smiling hills of Ephraim. From this point it is only a winding mountain path, picturesquely wooded. It is reckoned three day's journey from Jerusalem to Sychar, the modern Nablous. Travelling on foot, under the burning sun of Syria, Jesus, about the middle of the third day, reached the well which Jacob had digged before Sychem. Near it is the tomb of Joseph; the surrounding country has in no way changed since the sacred hour; like the poor pilgrims who may be met at the same spot to-day, returning from Nazareth, the Saviour of the world sat down by it to rest. The well is now dry, but its depth can be easily measured. All around are still the waving corn-fields. Before the traveller rise the two mountains of Ebal and Gerizim; on the latter a heap of stones marks the place where stood the Samaritan temple, built by Manasseh to rival the sanctuary at Jerusalem. The flat roofs of the neighbouring city are discernible through the olive trees. In its whole general aspect the place is unchanged; no page of the Gospel story bears a more clear seal of historical reality.

It is well known that a mortal hatred divided the Jews and

the Samaritans; the former regarded the latter as apostates and traitors; they lavished on them terms of contempt, and received a large return. This animosity had deepened, since, under the government of Coponius, some years before, a band of Samaritans had made a sudden descent upon Jerusalem during the feast of the Passover, and had profaned the sanctuary by throwing into it human bones. Their design was to render impossible for that year, the celebration of the grandest solemnity of the Jews.* The latter regarded it as an abomination to hold any intercourse with a Samaritan. The rabbis, by a false austerity, held equal scruples about speaking to any woman whatever. This explains the astonishment of the woman, when Jesus opened the conversation with her. She had come, according to eastern custom, with her pitcher upon her head to draw water. This woman united in herself all that could excite the contempt of a Jew, not only by her extraction, but also by her antecedents. But the redeeming love which seeks that which is lost, is neither held back by prejudice nor repelled by shame. Forgetful of his weariness Jesus fixes His pitying gaze on this degraded and ignorant creature. By a special revelation he reads the dark secret of her life; He sees also within her the vague aspirations, which so many sins have not wholly stifled. The interview opens with perfect simplicity. The Master makes the commonest incident of daily life the basis of His highest lesson. The well, on the edge of which He is sitting, becomes an expressive emblem of the divine life, which He will cause to flow like a perennial spring of living water.† The teaching becomes more direct when Jesus aims like a pointed dart at the conscience of this sinning woman, the stern remark, "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thine husband." "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," she instantly exclaims, overwhelmed and subdued by this revelation of herself. She at once submits to this Stranger, who can read so well the

* Josephus, "Ant." XVIII. 2, § 2. † John iv. 4.



...ed in truth." ...
first to receive the rev
St. Paul was to assure
Church, at the cost of
show more clearly that
apostle to assert her ind

Just as Jesus has a
Messiah with the words,
disciples came back from
gone to seek to recruit H
are forgotten when the
obedience and love.
pressed Him to eat, "is
and to finish His work."*
in the field of the fath
had sown and toiled
were the cravings of the
ardent impatience of the
ears?† By one of those
Him, Jesus passes from
ciples. After all, they ha
prepared and fertilised. L
which has gone before thei
associate the sowers in thei

in these beautiful words, "Now we believe, not because of thy testimony: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."* Assuredly such a result was in itself a demonstration that the harvest of souls was ripening. Every event in this holy life was a new revelation.

It was not only as a measure of prudence, and in order not to hasten the moment of final conflict between Himself and the chiefs of the nation, that Jesus went back into Galilee on learning the imprisonment of John the Baptist; this event was to Him a new reason for entering in a more decided manner on His public ministry. Hitherto, with the exception of the purification of the Temple, which was rather a strong protest against the profanation of divine service, than the inauguration, properly speaking, of His own work, He had acted in a private sphere. The baptism administered by His disciples was not distinguished in any marked manner from that of the Forerunner. But now that John's voice was silenced, the moment has come for Messiah to stand forth before the people. Jerusalem is not a favourable place for such a manifestation; His cause would there be foredoomed to failure, for His enemies have in their hands all the means to arrest it from the first step. The holy city will be His scene of conflict; it cannot be the sphere of His habitual activity. The true Israelites are not to be found there, or at least, the city is completely dominated by the heads of the hierarchy. Galilee lends itself much more readily to His design, not because it is more ignorant than Judæa, but because it is less subservient to the theocracy, and more accessible to unofficial teaching. This province was, nevertheless, strongly attached to the religion of the Old Testament, and, like the border provinces, it was remarkable for tried fidelity to the national cause, without the intractable fanaticism of Judæa.

Jesus goes again to Cana. This visit is marked by a second

* John iv. 42.



Nazareth. It was a
the very town in which
of Joseph the carpente
repaired to the synago
to listen to the custon
books. The passage f
Isaiah, which describes
a triumphal king, but as
ing the eyes of the bli
bringing in the era of
humanity.‡ In the mids
Jesus exclaims, "This d
ears." Then He proceec
the sacred text.§ His he
and childhood, are not le
ful to the Jewish spirit, t
His hands, as if it was a
self to the town where H
justly severe. He asse

* Βασιλικὸς (John iv. 46,
† This miracle is wrong
Baur, as identical with t
related by Matthew and L
two miracles are

grace, which then, as in the days of Elijah and Elisha, acknowledged no other claim to its gifts than humble faith. Had not a poor Phœnician widow at Sarepta, and a Syrian general at Damascus, been preferred of old to the proud and unbelieving Jews? At this saying all their evil passions were aroused; they thrust Jesus out of their city, but He, "passing through the midst of them, went his way." Thus a murderous cry was raised against Him from His first appearance in Galilee.

IV. The Feast of Purim at Jerusalem. Healing of the paralytic. Apologetic discourse.

In the month of March, Jesus repaired to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of Purim, instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews by Esther and Mordecai.* This festival brought large numbers of people into the holy city, and was distinguished by its popular and joyous character. To the north-east of the Temple, not far from the Sheep Gate, now St. Stephen's Gate, was situated the great pool of Bethesda; here the sick and paralytic came to seek relief for their maladies in its waters, which had the property of being intermittent.†

* It is of great importance, for the chronology of the New Testament, to determine what is the feast spoken of in John v. 1. In the majority of the manuscripts the article is wanting, and we have simply *ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων*. An argument was drawn from this in favour of the Feast of Purim rather than the Passover feast. The article re-appears in the "Sinaiticus." In spite of this, the reasons again the Feast of the Passover seem to us to prepondorate. We will point out the principal. First, John always mentions by name the great Jewish feasts, and especially the Passover. (John ii. 13, 23; vi. 4; xi. 55; xii. 1, 2.) Second, if the feast here intended was the Passover, Jesus, having celebrated one Passover in Galilee (John vi. 4), would not have gone up to Jerusalem till the next Feast of Tabernacles, in the month of Nisan, 783. He would then have been absent from the holy city a year and a half, which seems improbable. Third, on this hypothesis we should have an entire year of the ministry of Jesus, that between the Passover at Jerusalem and the Passover in Galilee, of which the fourth Gospel would say nothing; a thing wholly unlikely.

† The verse John v. 4, which speaks of the angel troubling the water, is wanting in the most ancient MSS., and the Sinaiticus.

The pool formed a kind of circular portico, from which a narrow staircase led down to the pool. On a marble bench were crowded the sick and the impotent, presenting a lamentable spectacle, which could not fail to move the compassionate heart of Jesus. According to His wont, He addressed Himself first to the poorest and most hopeless. An unhappy paralytic lay by the pool, who could never find a friendly hand to lift him into the water. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Jesus says to him; "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." The paralytic believed the word; he arose as in the days of his strength. Never did the Pool of Bethesda better merit its beautiful name of House of Mercy than on this day. In this scene, so grand and touching, the Pharisees saw but one thing—a violation of their tradition. In presence of that healed and pardoned man, they raised a cry of scandal, because a miracle had been wrought on the Sabbath day. Ultra-Sabbatarianism was the very genius of the Pharisaic religion; in defending this it defended its essential principle and end; in openly attacking it, or rather, in simply placing Himself above its absurd restrictions in order to do good, Jesus founded the religion of the Spirit, and abolished that of the mere letter. One touch of His compassionating love sufficed to break the galling network of narrow precepts; at one breath of His lips, the so carefully embalmed corpse of Judaism crumbled into dust. To do a deed of mercy on the Sabbath day was to oppose eternal and divine morality to that which was merely artificial and conventional. The Pharisees were right, from their point of view, in commencing the conflict on this ground; they were fighting verily *pro aris, pro focis.*

The excitement was great in Jerusalem when it was known that the new teacher had dared to violate the Sabbath, in order to heal an immortal creature made in the image of God. He was assailed with violent recriminations, and a determined purpose was formed to bring the offender to justice.* Jesus

* John v. 16.

does not condescend to justify His deed. He raises the question to a higher sphere. He appeals to His eternal relation with God, to that entire subordination of the Son to the Father, which results in a profound harmony of purpose and a community of power. The activity of divine love is ceaseless; it knows no rest, no Sabbath. Hence its right to intervene at all times for the good and salvation of men. This conformity between Jesus and God has just been manifested in the miracle for which He is reprobated; it will be manifested yet far more gloriously in the judgment of the world and the resurrection of the dead at the last day. These truly divine works are even now begun. The words of Jesus condemn the hearts which reject them, and give eternal life to those by whom they are received. Thus, even now He is the Judge, and His voice bids the dead to live. Do they call upon Him to prove these bold assertions which rouse the cry of blasphemy? He invokes other testimony than His own; He has a witness greater than that of John the Baptist; it is God Himself who speaks by these miraculous works of His ambassador, and who makes Himself heard with yet greater power in the depths of the heart by the secret voice of conscience,—a truly divine utterance to those who receive it. "Ye have not His word abiding in you, for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not." It is utterly false to bring forward holy scripture against this inward witness; they do but confirm each other. The real cause of the alienation of the Jews from Jesus is a moral cause. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," and why will you not? Because between your life and mine there is a fundamental discord. I seek not my own glory; I represent self-sacrificing love, and you are proud seekers of human praise. This constitutes the incompatibility between us; it is on this account you have not the faculty to comprehend Me. You, the pretended disciples of Moses, know not how to read the books which you teach, and which are full of Me. You



Jesus points out i
principle of the op
sition is far more
since it has against
and that of Scriptu
demonstration is co
more to exasperate
obliged to leave Je
remain till the next

* John v. 17-47.

CHAPTER II.

MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE DURING THE TIME OF PUBLIC FAVOUR.

I. General character of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee. Early miracles and early public discourses in that country.

WE have seen a few young Galileans attaching themselves to Jesus from the commencement of His ministry, accompanying Him in His journeys to Jerusalem, and living in intimate association with Him. They already called themselves His disciples, and were indeed such, in the affection and respect with which they regarded Him, but there was as yet nothing definite in the relation which bound them to the Saviour. On their return with Him into Galilee they resume their customary labours; but they are ripening for a more positive vocation. Ignorant as they yet are, they have learned to know and love Jesus, and have a vague consciousness of His exalted dignity. Their hearts are His. There is nothing to hinder the Master's forming a yet closer tie between them and Himself. The first whom He definitely called were James and John, the sons of Zebedee. These were simple fishers, living on the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, and maintaining themselves by their craft. Jesus joins them one day at dawn, just as they are drawing up their net on the strand, having toiled all night and taken nothing. He enters into one boat, which is Simon's; this serves Him as an extempore pulpit, from which to address the people who crowd upon the shore. When His discourse is finished He bids Simon throw his net again; and now it can hardly be drawn in for the multitude of

fishes. The miracle touches the ardent and impressible soul of Simon to its depths. This manifestation of supernatural power flashes a new light on all that he has already seen and heard; he feels himself in the presence of a holy being, and falls at His feet exclaiming, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."* No moment is more favourable for the great call than the moment of humiliation, for it is best received on the knees. "Fear not," says Jesus, "from henceforth thou shalt catch men."† The four disciples hesitate not a moment; they leave their boat and their nets. This call is not yet the institution of the apostolic office, but it is the first condition of it, for, before being an apostle, it is necessary, like the sons of James and Zebedee, to have left all to follow Jesus. The individuality of the first disciples will come out gradually before us, and we shall sketch their principal traits when they receive their definitive commission.

Of all the provinces of Palestine, the most beautiful is that in which Jesus now lived for several months, scattering everywhere, as He passed through it, the seed of divine truth. Galilee is distinguished from Judæa by its fertility and the softness of its landscapes. It has not the wild grandeur of the environs of Jerusalem; plentifully irrigated by numerous watercourses, it spreads before the eye a brilliant carpet of enamelled verdure, encompassed by mountains. Tabor is a grassy dome, the outlines of which seem chiselled against the sky. It is especially in contrast with the stern aspects of Judæa, that the soft, smiling scenes of Galilee impress the traveller. If Christianity was to be the offspring of mere beauty of nature, it might certainly have found a more enchanting birthplace—such as the golden shores of Ionia, or

* Luke v. 8, 9. The words of Peter imply a previous relation with Jesus, for the miraculous draught would not have in itself sufficed to reveal to him the holiness of the Master. The narrative of John is implied in that of Luke.

† Ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν (Luke v. 10; compare Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20).

nagic isles which rise out of a sea of azure on the shores
a Minor. The most striking feature of that part of
which was the principal scenes of the ministrations of
is an air of quietness and serenity not to be met with
ere. The Lake of Tiberias, even after so many wars
vages, still bears the impress of pure and peaceful

Its western shore is reached by the last slopes of a
of green hills, which sink undulating to the water's edge.
lers fringe the blue waters; opposite, on the eastern
the flood beats against rugged rocks, the last ramparts
wild country of the Gadarenes. At the northern
ity, the Jordan loses itself in the Lake, to re-appear in
ing sheet at the southern end. In the distance, towards
rth-west, Hermon lifts its snowy peaks, which stand out
the intense blue of the Syrian sky; while a little further,
south-west, the mountain of Safed closes in the horizon.
radiant hours of early morning, or those of an em-
l twilight, the lake reproduces with exquisite charms in
mirror all the accidents of light. A golden haze some-
angs over it like a heavenly veil. One would fain wake
ie surrounding hills the echo of the holy words of the
. If there was ever under heaven a temple not made
ands, it is surely this country, the true land of the
, on which we as plainly read the history of the
ner as in the pages of our sacred books. The thoughts
st were cast in the mould of this tender scene of nature,
m it He drew His chosen emblems.

doubt, in order to form a just idea of the country, it
be seen animated and peopled as it was eighteen cen-
go, instead of as it now is—branded with the curse of
m. Formerly, on the shores of the lake rose numerous
inhabited by an active population; the inhabitants of
e plain of Gennesaret gave themselves up to agriculture,
ie dwellers on the shore lived by fishing and trading.
time of Christ, the towns on the western shore were,

first, Magdala, now *Mejdel;* Chorazin, recognisable by a spring overshadowed by a fig-tree; Bethsaida (*Kan-Minieh*), of which there remains only a ruined aqueduct and a fishing hamlet; and last, not far from the embouchure of the Jordan, Capernaum (*Tell-Hum*), which was the habitual abode of Jesus, now nothing but a heap of stones. Standing between the plain of Gennesaret and the Lake, this town became a mart of considerable trade.* On the eastern shore stood a second Bethsaida, built by Philip, tetrarch of Iturea and Gaulonitis. These little cities enjoyed much prosperity, owing to their excellent situation; they were, however, regarded rather as villages than towns; they had few men of mark among their inhabitants, on account

* The situation of Magdala and that of Bethsaida present no difficulty. It is otherwise with respect to Chorazin and Capernaum. Robinson places the first of these towns at Tell-Hum, and the second at Kan-Minieh, reversing the names as we have given them. He takes his stand, first, on the vague testimony of pilgrims, who had not themselves visited this part of the lake of Tiberias; secondly, on a passage in Josephus, which says that Capernaum owed its name to the fountain which spread fertility over the Plain of Gennesaret (Josephus, "Ant" III. 10, 8). Robinson supposes this spring, which is called, according to him, *fountain of consolation*, or *Kafer Naum*, to be the spring which flows under the fig-tree of Kan-Minieh. Wilson and Ritter dispute this opinion on very strong grounds; the following are the principal: First, the spring of Kan-Minieh rises from the ground, quite close to the Lake, into which it falls. This then cannot be the stream which watered the plain. Secondly, Josephus tells us ("Vita" LXXII.) that having been severely wounded near the *embouchure* of the Jordan during the war of independence, he was carried by soldiers to a village called *Capernaum*, where he lay for a day prostrate with fever. Now *Tell-Hum* is two hours nearer to the *embouchure* of the Jordan than Kan-Minieh. There can be no doubt that it was to this village the sufferer was carried. From John vi. 23, we learn that Capernaum was not far from the Bethsaida on the eastern coast, where, according to Luke ix. 10, the multiplication of the loaves took place. Now, Tell-Hum is opposite this second Bethsaida, which is situated at the northern end of the Lake. The name of Tell-Hum is a synonym of Capernaum. Kaphar-Nahum, signified the village of Nahum. *Hum* is a contracted form of Nahum, and *Tell* means hill; this designation answers perfectly to the situation of Capernaum. (See this whole question in Ritter's "Erdkunde," XV. p 339).

of their distance from the capital. Each of them had its synagogue and representatives of the various Jewish schools. The Pharisees and Sadducees strove for influence here as at Jerusalem, but their credit was far less than in the immediate neighbourhood of the Temple. The population would be tolerably dense in so rich a district. The Lake was perpetually furrowed by the boats of the fishermen; nothing was more easy than to gather a multitude in the open air in this fine climate.

Such was the land in which Jesus led the itinerant life of a missionary; He had no fixed abode, and except occasional sojourns in Capernaum, He passed His days in going about doing good. Endowed with a heart pre-eminently loving, a son so tender, that in a dying hour His thoughts were of ministering consolation to His mother, Jesus yet allows himself to be restrained by none of the ties of natural affection. In order to accomplish His especial work, He must needs live aloof from all the social conditions of ordinary life. The birds of the air have their nests, the foxes their holes, and the sons of men their homes, but the Master might not have where to lay His head, when He came to fulfil His mission as founder of the true religion for man. The period of foundation has peculiar exigencies, which do not belong to those of preservation and development. Jesus' first disciples were themselves obliged to share in these stern necessities. When He called them to leave all and follow Him, He was only bidding them do what He Himself had done. Yet let us make no mistake; this demand of complete self-renunciation was not an exceptional one in their case; it has never ceased to be made of God's labourers, and it is for ever true that he who puts his hand to the plough must cast no look backward. Only the extraordinary is more blended in our day with the ordinary current of life, than could be the case in the beginnings of Christianity.

Jesus lived chiefly with His spiritual family, freely using their hospitality, as did the rabbis of the time. He voluntarily

remained the poorest of all; if He accepted the assistance of His followers,* He never rose above the humblest condition of life. He was surrounded by the disciples whom He had enlightened, by pious women who had found pardon and consolation in His words; so far from repelling the fallen, He drew them to Him by the powerful attraction of compassion. Jesus sought out the feeble, the forsaken, all who needed succour and pity, the beggar on the highway, the leper by the city gates, and the little child in its mother's arms. His ministrations were divided between the multitudes to whom He preached the Gospel, and the familiar circle of His disciples, whom He taught with a solicitude only equalled by his patience. Then at evening, after so many labours, and often such painful conflicts, He ascended the nearest hill, and there renewed His strength from its eternal source by solitary prayer. It was from these sacred heights, to which His soul fled for refuge, that His word came down like a living stream to spread its full floods over the thirsty land of Israel.

The Judæan year was divided by various festivals. Jesus owned the obligation of their observance, but without taking any heed of the traditions of the Pharisees. Every Sabbath He repaired to the synagogue in the town where He was, and, with a single exception, He always went up to Jerusalem to the solemn feasts.

We shall best enter into the manner of His ordinary life by following Him through one of the days of which the narrative is given us in the second Gospel. It was a Sabbath.† As soon as it was day, Jesus repaired to the synagogue, and founded His teaching on the portion of Scripture which was read. The impression produced by His words was profound; the listeners felt at once the difference between this Teacher and the rabbis to whom they were accustomed. Instead of an impersonal organ of tradition, they heard a living voice which went down into the depths of their heart; it was spiritual authority taking

* Luke viii. 2. 3. † See Mark i. 21–39.

the place of dead dogmatism; they were conscious at once that in His teaching there was an extraordinary virtue. A poor man possessed with a devil was present in the assembly, and was seized with convulsions. The devil which exercised a mysterious influence over him threw him into a frenzy of excitement; with a look and a word Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, and the sufferer was healed and in his right mind. The witnesses of this astonishing scene were filled with admiration, and went out of the synagogue to spread in the city the news of the miracle.

Jesus retired to the house of Peter and Andrew, where He healed Peter's wife's mother of an attack of fever. The hours of the day were spent under this hospitable roof, the meal was taken in common, and the disciples received doubtless from the lips of the Master the explanation of His discourse in the synagogue. We at least know that such was the wont of Jesus in the familiar circle of His friends. But the events of the morning had produced a strong sensation in the city. The rumour had spread that the new prophet worked mighty miracles, and that His mercy was as large as His power. The whole population gathered at the gate at Capernaum. The gate of an eastern city is the great place of public resort; it occupies the same position as the *agora* of Greek cities. Under the ardent sky of Syria, the cool hours of evening are chosen by the inhabitants for coming out of their houses; then begins a singularly noisy stir of life—the women go to the fountain with their pitchers on their heads, the men gather in groups about the gates of the city to talk over the events and interests of the day. That evening, the report of the miracles of Jesus banished every other theme at Capernaum. Every family brought out its sick; all these sufferers were assembled at the gate—some bedridden, some tossing in the terrible agony of possession. A melancholy spectacle, the epitome in this little corner of the world of all the world's sufferings! But the scene was soon changed. Jesus with tender pity "laid his hand

upon the sick folk and healed them." The enraptured crowd followed His retreating footsteps with shouts of acclaim. The next morning, before the sun was up, while all was silent in Capernaum, He sought a solitary place by the shores of the lake, and spent long hours in prayer.* Thus did He hide himself from glory and fame, and, ever at hand to succour and save, was sought for in vain in the hour of popular enthusiasm. A day like this may be regarded as the epitome of the entire life of Jesus. Public and private teaching, works of mercy, intense and solitary prayer, drawing heaven down into his heart—these are the elements of His daily course.

From the break of day the inhabitants of Capernaum began to seek for Jesus, to hear Him again, and yet more to receive fresh tokens of His miraculous mercy. The Master never repulsed the crowds who came to Him; He needed this great concourse of hearers to make His name known to His people. But He carefully avoided remaining long in one place, so as to give no pretext for enthusiasm to take the form of political agitation. He goes through the country, returning from time to time to Capernaum, to the house of Bar Jonas; everywhere as He goes He sows the seeds of holy words and works of mercy. During this period His miracles make a more impressive appeal to the multitude than His words; the admiration for Him is universal and unreserved, because it is not yet tempered by the austerity and spirituality of a teaching, which passes their comprehension and their desires; they have eyes only for His works. His name passes from mouth to mouth; Judæa is stirred by hearing what is passing on the borders of the Lake of Gennesaret; Peræa and Decapolis echo the acclamations of Galilee. Glory goes before Him who never sought it. And what does He do? With sublime simplicity Luke tells us, "So much the more went there a fame abroad of him but he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed."†

One of the cures wrought by Jesus specially arrested public

* Mark i. 35. † Luke v. 15, 16.

attention. In one of the Gallilean towns, He was met by one of those wretched lepers, outlaws from all social life, who still hover about the gates of the towns of Judæa, exhibiting their hideous sores and uttering heartrending cries. Jesus healed the sufferer by laying His hands upon him. In spite of His express command, the man who had been delivered from so terrible a woe went about everywhere publishing this great miracle,* and the enthusiasm about Jesus rose above all bounds. It was founded in part on a misunderstanding which could not last long, and which the humility of the new prophet was always tending to dispel. A Messiah who seeks seclusion and flees from royal honour is not the Messiah looked for in Judæa. As soon as the people are disabused of their mistake, hatred will quickly succeed to favour. The men of the schools and the rulers do not share the general enthusiasm. We are about to see the Pharisaic party, even in Galilee, assuming an attitude hostile to Jesus. The first symptom of this disposition was manifested on the occasion of the healing of a paralytic at Capernaum, during one of the short sojourns of Jesus in that city. One day when He was surrounded by a crowd gathered from all the country round, He entered into a house to teach. A palsied man was brought to be healed; his bearers, unable to reach the entrance because of the densely pressing throng, thought of the expedient of opening the movable trapdoor often found in the roofs of oriental houses; by this bold stroke they succeeded in placing their sick friend at the feet of the prophet. Touched with this act of faith, Jesus begins His work of healing first on the soul. "Son," He says to the paralytic, "thy sins are forgiven thee." The Pharisees exclaim at the blasphemy, and their irritation is increased when they see the impotent man rise and take up his bed. Nothing could make them more

* Luke v. 12–16; Mark i. 40–45; Matt. viii. 1–4. M. Schenkel has made a wonderful discovery that the leper must have been half cured when he came to Jesus. "Characterbild," p. 73.

indignant than this claim of the new Teacher to effect direct reconciliation with God, without any respect to their traditions and their rights. They were yet more incensed against Him when, two days after, He openly called Levi, the tax-gatherer, a man in whom they saw the hireling of the oppressors of their country, into the ranks of His disciples.* When the Pharisees murmured at Him for sitting at meat with a publican, He met them with the wonderful answer, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."† The old adver— saries of the Baptist did not hesitate now to bring forward hi— example, and to reproach Jesus by the asceticism of this son — the desert. "Can the children of the bridechamber fast whi— the bridegroom is with them?" He rejoins. With Messi— begins the holy union between the soul and God, so oft— declared by the prophets. The first hour of spiritual espous— must needs be one of joy. A sorrowful moment will so— come; there are sure tokens of it already in the malice of — rulers of the hierarchy, ready to break forth on every occasi— Besides, Jesus in His delicate and skilful teaching, proportio— His precepts to the capacity of His disciples. To summ— them at once to all the severities of a crucified life would be— pour the new wine into the old bottles.‡

The question of Sabbath observance could not fail to pres— itself in Galilee as in Judæa. The disciples are denoun— with much indignation as violators of the law of God, bec— they pluck some ears of corn to appease their hunger on — day of rest. Jesus appeals from this fastidious and hy— critical legislation to the spirit of the law itself; He add— the example of David, who did not scruple to give his c— panions the sacred bread from the altar to eat. "The Sabl—

* See in the Introduction the proofs of the identity of Levi with Matthew.

† Luke v. 31, 32.

‡ See Luke v. 33; Matt. ix. 14–17; Mark ii. 18–22.

was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."* The Pharisees, by their narrow interpretation of the fifth commandment, made a sort of idol of it, to which they voluntarily sacrificed human life without any profit to the soul, for in reality their insistance on the literal observance led to the moral violation of the divine law contained in the great declaration, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."† If the Sabbath was made for man, it belongs to the representative head of the new humanity so to regulate its observance, that it shall not be diverted from its proper end. "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."‡ All the theology of St. Paul lies in germ in these profound words, to which the Sermon on the Mount is to form the admirable commentary.

Jesus does more than offer an apology for His disciples; He boldly asserts His right as Master of the Sabbath. In a full synagogue, at the very hour of the reading of the sacred books, a paralyzed man is placed in the middle of the assembly, and Jesus heals him publicly. That His meaning may not be mistaken, He affirms His right with singular energy, not unmixed with grief and indignation. Surely if it is permitted to draw an ass out of a pit on the Sabbath day, it cannot be unlawful to heal a man made in the image of God. He was indeed right; such an argument was irrefragable. The Pharisees could not evade it; so, leaving the ground of open discussion, they had recourse to artifice and plots. In Galilee they sought allies in the party of the Herodians, with whom they had some political affinities, because the latter upheld a power different from that of the Romans. From this moment the popularity of Jesus is on the wane. Without abandoning His public work among His countrymen, He begins to devote Himself increasingly to His disciples. The further the old

* Τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο, οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον (Mark ii. 27; Luke vi. 1–5).

† Matt. xii. 7.

‡ Luke vi. 5.

theocracy is estranged from Him, the closer He draws to that new religious body which He has instituted. To this period belong the choice of the apostles and the Sermon on the Mount.

II. Choice of the Twelve Apostles.

It is not needful for us to enter again on an explanation of the true meaning of the apostolic office; let us content ourselves with seeking out the motives which guided Jesus in the selection of these twelve men, destined to become the first nucleus and the ideal representation of the Church.* An apostle was not simply called to be the disseminator of a doctrine; his mission was to lay the foundations of a religion. Neither personal attachment nor mere courage was enough for such a task; it needed that the apostle should have the very mind of Jesus—that absolute disinterestedness which makes the life one great self-sacrifice. The office of an apostle has in it the very essence of martyrdom. Nothing can exceed the beautiful simplicity of its appointment. Its grandeur was purely spiritual; it was not therefore inaugurated with pomp like the Levitical priesthood. And yet what magnificence of the ancient worship could surpass the solemnity of that sacred hour, when Jesus, after passing the night in prayer, on one of the hills which surround Capernaum, called His twelve apostles? He did not choose them from the high orders of the hierarchy, or among the representatives of the religious learning of His time; He took them from the common people, rough, ignorant, more accustomed to work with their hands than to use their intellect, but characterised by the childlike freshness and uprightness of simple souls. No doubt He found in them more than one prejudice to be destroyed, but at least their moral being had not been falsified and corrupted by artificial culture; their conscience was not stifled under the heavy armour of Pharisaic tradition; these truthful natures could readily receive the impress of the teaching, and yet more of the

* Matt. x. 1–15; Mark iii. 13–19; Luke vi. 12–16.

personal character of Jesus. About to lay the foundation of the great edifice designed to shelter so many generations, He sought as it were in the midst of the masses of the people, the block of virgin marble to be fashioned to His will. Apart from this, the most remarkable gifts of heart and mind had been dispensed to these twelve men.

We are already acquainted with the principal of them, in the first rank of whom stand the two sons of Jonas, Simon, surnamed Peter, and Andrew, both natives of Bethsaida. They had been twice called by the Master before this august day. If the figure of Andrew fades into dimness beside that of his brother, he retains, nevertheless, the honour of having been the first to hail Jesus,* and he ever shows himself zealous in His service.† Peter's is a nature ardent, sincere, impressible, capable of passing in an instant from enthusiasm to depression; in him is found that bold spirit of the pioneer which, when purified in the crucible of trial and repentance, will make him the man of action and preponderating influence in the first period of the apostolic age. He comes fresh from his fisherman's boat, though both he and his brother have been disciples in the school of John the Baptist. The sons of Zebedee come to Jesus in the same way. They have yet much to learn, and, first of all, the humility which renounces all eagerness for precedence, alike in the church and in the world;‡ they are yet very far from that charity which can pardon all things, even insult offered to the Master. Their love for Jesus is sometimes ready to break into violence; but, when purged from this human admixture, it will burn with purest light. James will be the first to shed his blood for the Gospel, and John will be the beloved disciple. His development will be the more rich for being so long and gradual; we know already that it is he who, in the evening of the apostolic age, utters the closing words of revelation—those words of love which are the epitome of the whole, and which he learnt in the very bosom of his

* John i. 40. † Matt. xiii. 3; John xii. 22. ‡ Mark x. 35-37.

Lord. Philip, and Nathanael surnamed Bartholomew, are also disciples from the first. Matthew, called only a few days before from the receipt of custom, is still wholly imbued with the piety of a Jew of the old dispensation, and his great concern will always be to find out the relation between the two covenants. Thomas bears some resemblance to Peter; we mark in him the same impetuosity, the same devoted affection, sometimes capable of rising into heroism; but he is often at fault, and only recovers himself by his ardent impulses.* We know nothing definite about Judas, who appears to be the same as Thaddeus or Lebbæus, and who was probably the brother of James, the son of Alphæus.† Neither of these takes any marked position in the church of the first century. The surname of Zelotes given to Simon, leads to the supposition that this apostle had already shown that ardent zeal which, some years later, was to give birth to a new party in Galilee. He was a native of Cana.

The name of Judas Iscariot stands out with lurid distinctness in this catalogue of the apostles. If he was chosen by Jesus, it was assuredly not that he might be made the fatal instrument of a mysterious decree. Never could a human soul be thus lowered without the complete overthrow of moral order. Let us not forget that Jesus did not inherently possess omniscience: assuredly when He made Judas an apostle He did not foresee what He would become.‡ He perceived in him, as in His other disciples, a commixture of good and evil tendencies. He might hope that under His influence the good would overcome the evil; the balance depended on Judas himself. The twelfth apostle appears to have been of a strong and passionate

* John xi. 16. † Jude 1.

‡ Strauss sets against this assertion the text (John vi. 70) where Jesus expresses Himself with severity against Judas. But this was not spoken till a considerable time after the choice of the twelve, and when the searching eye of the Master had been able to read what was passing in the heart of the apostle. The passage in John ii., 25, "He knew what was in man," cannot be taken in an absolute sense.

nature, as is proved by his tragical end. Probably he had attached himself to Jesus with extraordinary ardour, hoping to find in Him the Messiah of his theocratic dreams, and uniting ambitious views with a sincere attachment to His person. It was for the future to show if the dark passions latent within him would yield to the influence of Jesus. In the heart of every man a demoniacal force lies dormant; it is for him to quell or unloose it. The higher he has been raised in spiritual privilege, the more terrible will be his fall. He who is not transformed by contact with perfect holiness, sinks to the depths of the abyss, and no man could be more akin to a devil than a perverted apostle.*

The twelve were not all in indigence. The mother of John ministered to Jesus of her substance;† Peter and Andrew had a house at Capernaum;‡ Matthew gave a feast to the Master § But it is clear, nevertheless, that the apostles belonged to the lower class, and were to the Jews at Jerusalem despised provincials, whose very speech was open to ridicule. They were accounted unlearned and ignorant men.‖ Celibacy was plainly not required of them, for it is certain that Peter was married, and this may have been the case with others. In the company of pious women who followed Jesus, even to the foot of the cross, were Salome, the mother of James and John, and Mary, the mother of James the Less. Thus, in the very dawn of the new religion, appears that type of the Christian mother, one of the most beautiful creations of the Gospel.

There must be no misconception as to the spiritual state of these young men at the time they were chosen; they were still very ignorant, infected with Jewish prejudices, incapable of rising to the sublime thoughts of their Master. They were "fools and slow of heart to believe;"¶ thus they often saddened the heart of Jesus, though they could not exhaust His patience in the work of their religious education. This work was not to

* John vi. 70. † Luke viii. 3. ‡ Mark i. 29.
§ Matt. ix. 10. ‖ Acts iv. 13. ¶ Luke xxiv. 25.

be fully accomplished till He should have gone away from them, and the Holy Spirit should have come upon them, accompanied with the chastening influence of trial.*

III. Sermon on the Mount.

It was a few days after the choice of His apostles that Jesus delivered the discourse generally known as the *Sermon on the Mount.* Although it was primarily addressed to the twelve apostles, they were not the only hearers, for both Matthew and Luke mention a great multitude seated listening at His feet.† It is impossible, therefore, to make out a clear distinction between the two recorded discourses, as if the first was spoken by Jesus in the small circle of His friends, while the second was addressed to the multitude.‡ The audience is, clearly, one, and the only difference between the two Gospels is, that the one gives us the sermon in full, while the other has preserved it in brief and vivid outline.§ In Matthew, there is an observable interpolation of words spoken on other occasions; while, in Luke, there are obvious gaps and omissions.‖ The

* It is not necessary to point out that there is no trace of a hierarchy in the choice of the apostles. The words *Thou art Peter*, which we shall explain in their place, belong to a much later date.

† Matt. vii. 28: "The people were astonished at his doctrine." Compare Luke vi. 19. 20.

‡ This is Lange's idea ("Leben Jesu," III., p. 576)

§ Matthew speaks of the sermon as delivered on the mountain, Luke on a plain (ἐπὶ τόπου πεδινοῦ, vi. 17.) But this expression might very well stand for one of the plateaus of the Galilean mountains. [Compare my Note in "Robinson's Harmony of Gospels" on p. 32, published by Religious Tract Society.—B.D.]

‖ Lange and M. Lutteroth have, each in his manner, established the unity of the sermon recorded by Matthew. We do not deny that a sufficiently close connection may be shown from the beginning to the end. It is because of their affinity that these sayings of Jesus have been thus collected. In our opinion, it is just this logical order which has suspended the chronological order; but it seems evident to us that Luke places in their true historical setting many of the words introduced by Matthew in this discourse. M. Lutteroth, in order to explain the length of the discourse as given in the first Gospel, translates the opening words of chap. v.,

Sermon on the Mount is the charter of the kingdom of God, as it was set up by Jesus Christ. Between the legislation of Sinai and this new legislation the contrast is complete; and yet the latter was the legitimate outgrowth of the former.

We are no more in the burning desert, at the foot of lightning-crowned Horeb, in a land of terror, where the divine voice reverberates like thunder among the naked rocks. Jesus is seated on a grassy slope, which by a gentle incline sinks down to the Lake of Tiberias. The gorges of Hattin, to which tradition assigns this great Gospel scene, command the enchanting landscape of the country of Gennesaret. Every utterance of nature is peace and love, and nothing is more easy than to picture to one's self the Master in such a scene, surrounded by His twelve apostles, and addressing the multitude seated on the flowery grass. His first word is not a threat, but a blessing. The new law is not, like the old, a terrible manifestation of divine holiness, flashing on the eyes of men in condemnatory and unapproachable purity. No, it is in its very essence grace and pardon; He who proclaims it is the Saviour of mankind. And yet the beatitudes must needs have been preceded by the terrors and thunders of the old covenant; they stand in necessary connection with the work of Moses, Elias, and John the Baptist—with the stern teaching of those great preachers of repentance, themselves great penitents; they commend themselves only to men whose hearts have been broken beneath the rod, and who have been disabused of the illusions of pride in the stern school of Sinai. These calm and holy words are, in their essence, a declaration of war against degenerate Judaism, for they overthrow all its idols, and set aside all its aims. Every beatitude has a corresponding anathema. Matthew restricts himself to the benedictions, because he knows well that they were sufficient in themselves

"Jesus was settled on the mountain" (*καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ*.) We should thus have rather a period of instruction than a sermon. (See also Ewald, work quoted, p. 308.)

to condemn Pharisaism. The Sermon on the Mount is not the opening of an idyl; it is the prelude of a drama, of a conflict; thus from its commencement it is transfused with a solemn foreboding. On these enchanted shores of the Sea of Galilee we see again the burning bush, out of which speaks the High and Holy One. The God of sovereign compassion is also a consuming fire.

The plan of the discourse is as simple as it is sublime. Jesus declares the conditions of entrance into the new kingdom. It opens not its gates to riches, nor to noisy mirth, nor to proud self-complacency, nor to hardness and acerbity of soul. Poverty of spirit, penitential tears, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the sweetness which exhales from a broken heart, like the perfume from a crushed flower, the mercy which makes peace, the simple uprightness of pure souls—such are the dispositions of the children of this kingdom. In other words, that which constitutes the right of entrance, that which gives a share in its consolations, in its triumphs, in its plenitude of life, in its forgivenesses, that which ensures the vision of God, and makes us His children and His heirs, is just that which is most opposed to the cherished dreams of the Jews. Instead of the pride which numbers its good works, self-abasing humility is alone acceptable with God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that weep, for they shall be comforted." Such words are truly kingly in their surprising boldness. He who dares so to speak in a world of sorrow must be a madman or a God. The opposition between such a doctrine and current ideas is so absolute, that he who accepts it must needs resign himself at once to opprobrium and persecution. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my name's sake." Thus the beatitudes begin with weeping, and are sealed with blood. These small and weak ones of the earth are called to the most terrible conflict, to the most heroic endurance; their only crown on earth will be the crown of the

martyr. Such is this octave of beatitudes, as Bossuet beautifully expresses it.

After pointing out the conditions of entrance into His kingdom, Jesus traces, in a few words, the noble mission of the new Israel; it is to be the light to lighten the world, and the salt to preserve it from corruption. Then He declares the law of His kingdom, showing that, far from destroying the old covenant, it truly accomplishes it, by supplementing all its imperfections. Instead of lessening moral obligation, He extends it, carrying it into the inner region of the heart. Thus He severs Himself from the Pharisees, whose constant endeavour was to multiply outward observances, so as the better to evade the law of inward holiness. Jesus not only sets aside the traditions of the schools, but, by a truly divine act, He modifies the Mosaic code itself. This interdicted the *act* of murder and adultery. Jesus ascends to the principle of these crimes, and reveals it to the conscience in those stirrings of hatred and of lust, which the rigorous observer of the letter indulged without scruple. He puts lying on the same level with perjury, and condemns all those forms of speech which would seem to countenance the idea that strict truthfulness is not always a sacred duty. For the law of retaliation, He substitutes the great commandment of true charity, which returns benefits for injuries and wrongs. "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." The new law is formed on the eternal type of good; it springs from this as from its source. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust." This divine principle puts to flight all the sophisms of Pharisaic casuistry.

Spurious devotion is denounced as unsparingly as spurious righteousness. The noisy almsgiving which seeks applause, the long prayers which are only vain forms, the ostentatious act which receives its reward in the admiration it calls forth; all these mendacities of a hypocritical religiousness are brought to the light. This wonderful picture abounds in sketches to the life. They were well known in Jerusalem—those hypocrites—who made a show of their piety in the synagogue and in the streets, sounding before them the trumpet of their pretended good works. How inimitable in force and originality are the directions of Jesus as to the exercise of true piety! "When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. When thou prayest, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do: When thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face." No man cast a more scornful glance on the whole world than the Jew; he avenged himself for his state of servitude by the implacable hatred with which he regarded the rest of mankind. Tacitus was not wrong when he reproached the Jew with being a hater of the human race. "Thou hypocrite," said Jesus, "first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

The latter part of His Sermon on the Mount is characterised by growing severity; after painting in one stroke the false prophet, who, under the sheep's clothing, is a devouring wolf, Jesus puts His finger on the mortal unsoundness of that false Judaism which He is come to abolish. Its condemnation is that it is no longer anything but a form and a formula, and does not carry out in reality the truth which it proclaims. It is not enough to say Lord, Lord; he must *do* the will of God, who would dare to stand in the judgment at the last day. Houses built upon a rock can alone resist the tempest. All those who having heard the word of God do not conform their lives to it, have built their houses upon the sand, and will see them fall at the first shock of the storm. Thus everything in

the Sermon on the Mount points to a living and spiritual law. It contains the most emphatic protest against the falsehoods and fictions of Pharisaism; it inaugurates the true spiritual worship which is alone worthy of God. By that which it overthrows, and that which it establishes, this sermon, which has been said to preach only a purified Judaism, unfurls the standard of the new covenant; the sovereign authority with which it accredits Jesus is compatible only with His incomparable dignity as Son of Man and Son of God.*

* The original sermon appears to me to comprehend the following passages in Matthew: First, Matt. v., vi. 1–9. The passage, Matt. vi. 9–16, is evidently interpolated here on account of the analogy of the subject. It is found in its true historical connection in Luke ix. 1–4. Second, vi. 16–19. The passage on worldly possessions interrupts the thread of the discourse; it also is in its right place in Luke xi. 14–36, and xii. 15–34. Third, vii. 1–6. The two following passages. vii. 7–13, and vii. 13–15 are brought in more naturally in Luke xi. 5–13, and xiii, 23–25. Fourth, vii. 15–28. It is incorrect to charge the condensed record of Luke with a tone of exaggerated ascetism. Evidently the reference is to those poor and afflicted who realise the precepts comprised in the same chapter, that is to say, who are merciful, meek and lowly. Poverty must be that of the spirit, to draw down the blessing. Besides, we find in Luke the words "Give to every man that asketh of thee" (vi. 30). This precept could have no meaning unless the right of property was recognised. It is certain, however, that the Gospel showed a strong preference for the poor, and that it was in fact among them that it found its first adherents. But it is widely removed from ascetic rules like those of the Essenes.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATION OF THE CRISIS IN GALILEE.

I. Sojourn at Nain.

THE Sermon on the Mount would have of itself sufficed to render impossible any reconciliation between Jesus Christ and the official representatives of religion. Every step of His progress will now hasten the moment when the people in their turn will abandon Him, because He never panders to their prejudices. Touched by the unfeigned faith of a centurion of Capernaum, whose servant He heals, He declares that the Gentiles will soon press before the children of Abraham into the kingdom of God. (Matt. viii. 11). The coming of the messengers whom John the Baptist, in an hour of depression and doubt, sends to Jesus from the depths of the prison, leads him to describe the mission of the Forerunner in the words we have already noticed; He concludes by addressing a severe rebuke to the men of His generation, who had shown equal indifference to the stern and thrilling appeal of the Baptist and to the gentle message of the Gospel; and had turned away alike from the merciful Comforter and the ascetic prophet of the desert. "But wisdom is justified by all her works."* Divine truth bears its own witness, and can dispense with the approval of men. Such words leave a sting of irritation in the hearer's hearts.

* Ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς πάντων (Luke vii. 35). The reading hitherto received has been, *Wisdom is justified of all her children.* The new reading, beside being confirmed by Justin Martyr, is found in the "Sinaiticus."

In the eyes of the Pharisee, infatuated with his own virtues and merits, pardon granted to great sinners is a personal offence, for it seems to him to derogate from his high rank, and puts on a level with him those whom he regards with scorn. Jesus encountered this odious prejudice face to face on one memorable occasion. He was spending a few days in the little city of Nain,* situated at the foot of Tabor, in a fertile and smiling plain. His arrival at this spot was at once signalised by a great miracle. He met at the gates of the city one of those funeral processions, which are as often to be seen under the brilliant blue of an eastern heaven, as under our pale western skies. This time it combined all the elements of sorrow; the mortal remains of a young man, the only son of a widow, cut off in the flower of his days, were being carried to the tomb; behind the bier came the weeping mother, bowed down under her heavy grief. Touched with divine compassion, Jesus gave back the son to his mother.† This miracle naturally produced an immense sensation. A large crowd was present at its performance, and the scenes already witnessed at the gates of Capernaum were re-enacted at Nain, as the whole town ran thither bringing the sick and the possessed.

To this motley group a woman joined herself who had no need of bodily healing; she was a sinner whose beauty had been her bane. The look of Jesus touched her to the soul; perhaps she was present when with sorrowful pity in His eyes He bent over the bier of the dead, and the same glance fell upon her, full of reproach and sadness, but also of pardon. The cold and obtrusive virtue of the Pharisee irritated her without kindling the blush of shame, but under the pure and pitiful gaze of Jesus, her burden became intolerable; she sounded the depths of the abyss into which she had fallen, and felt herself at the same time irresistibly drawn to that Holy One, who she knew would not repulse her. Listening to

* It was there He was met by the messengers of John the Baptist.

† Ἐσπλαγχνίσθη (Luke vii. 13).

nothing but the cry of her conscience and the impulse of her heart, she resolves, through all difficulties and at any cost, to go to Jesus. Little does it matter to her that at this very moment he is seated at the table of a stony-hearted Pharisee, who may perchance drive her from his doors; she braves all scorn, and throws herself at the feet of Jesus; she bathes them with very precious ointment, washes them with her tears, and wipes them with the hairs of her head. This unhappy woman repents with all the passionate fervour of her soul, and thirsting for pardon, restoration and purity, she seeks them at the feet of Jesus. Host and Saviour appear, each in his true character; the Pharisee murmurs, while Jesus welcomes this blighted but broken heart; He reserves His severity for the man of credit and distinction, well knowing the dead heart within him. Simon had received the Saviour with cold condescension, without offering Him any of the tokens of respect and affection which comported with eastern hospitality: his one design was to observe Jesus with an eye of malice, as is proved by his readiness to conclude, from His gentleness to the "woman which was a sinner," that He was no prophet. This woman, on the other hand, has crossed the threshold of that home, profoundly conscious of her degradation, and earnestly eager to break with sin. Her gratitude is proportioned to the greatness of her repentance, as the Master shows in His wonderful parable of the two creditors. It is easy to perceive, from the example of the Pharisee, that the man to whom little has been forgiven loves little; he repels pardon as an insult, and abides in his impotent pride. Penitent hearts, on the contrary, break and flow forth at the feet of Jesus, like the box of ointment which has just been poured over them. In this short hour, the sinner has loved much, for she knows what she is—a woman erring and justly despised—and she knows too who He is, who, instead of repulsing, deigns to lift her up. Therefore, according to the words of the Saviour, she has much forgiven. This pardon granted to a courtesan, and in such a house, is a

crying scandal to all the Pharisaic party, and it will be deeply avenged.*

There must be a singular delight in the profanation of holy things, when a slur can be cast on such a scene, and this sinner in tears can be represented as one of a train of "beautiful women," whom Jesus drew after Him, in order to make His cause agreeable and popular. Where do we find these beautiful women? Must we place in the category Salome, the mother of James and John, or Mary, the wife of Cleophas, mother of the two apostles,† or, forsooth, Mary of Magdala, who was delivered from the most terrible possession? Let us go no further. The very refutation of such a charge is itself an impiety.

That which happened at Nain recurred again and again. Jesus attracted those whom the world rejected. The despised and degraded came to Him in throngs, because they knew that He would welcome the sinner while he rebuked the sin. Nothing better marks the contrast between this infinite compassion and the harshness of the Pharisee, than the simple words of Luke, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him; and the Pharisees and scribes murmured."‡ Jesus answered these murmurs by His most touching parables. To go into the wilderness, seeking in weariness and pain the poor lost sheep, and forgetting in care for it the ninety and nine which had stayed in the fold—is not this the very work of Christ? Under this tender and beautiful image the early Church loved to represent Him, and when she would epitomise the Gospel in one eloquent symbol, she sketched on the sombre walls of the catacombs the figure of

* Strauss erroneously identifies this scene with that which, according to the fourth Gospel, transpired at Bethany. (ch. xiii. 1–8). The differences between the two narratives are wide. At Bethany the woman was not a sinner, but Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who had long known Jesus, and is commended by Him.

† Luke viii. 3.

‡ Luke xv. 1, 2.

the Good Shepherd. The similitude of the lost piece of money expresses the same idea. The parable of the prodigal son is the most pathetic representation of repentance, and offers the very ideal of Fatherhood. It closes with a severe rebuke to Pharisaic Judaism; it was impossible not to recognise its likeness in the elder son, of correct life but cold heart, the envious observer of the scene of reconciliation. The parable remarkably widens its horizon at its conclusion, for it intimates the return of the Gentile races to the Father's house, and the abrogation of the privileges of the chosen people. The faithful type of the latter was given in that proud and self-complacent virtue, which could count its merits and closely calculate its returns, while beside it flowed the tears of holy penitence.

II. Various Parables and Miracles.

The animosity of the Pharisees was displayed on all occasions. Thus, after the cure of a blind and deaf demoniac, they endeavoured, under the influence of some allies from Jerusalem, to throw discredit on the miracles of Jesus by ascribing them to the occult influence of devils; they were met by this unanswerable question, "How can Satan cast out Satan? A house divided against itself cannot stand, but is brought to nought."* From self-defence Jesus passes to direct attack. So to misconstrue His character and work, as to make Him the agent of devils, is to insult God in Him, and actually to blaspheme the divine Spirit who animates all His holy life. If there be an unpardonable sin, it is assuredly this; for to attribute to devils the very work of salvation is to show an absolute incapacity for understanding or appreciating the blessing. The refusal of God's pardon can take no more fearful form; it is the very consummation of perdition.

In spite of the malice which would soon assume a form of fierce opposition, Jesus pursued His ministry, healing and instructing the multitudes, but reserving for His disciples those

* See Matt. xii. 24, 25; Luke xi. 14-20.

deeper teachings, which demanded a more earnest and thoughtful attention than would be given by a moving crowd. To this period belongs His series of parables on the kingdom of God, the main idea of which we have pointed out in treating of the plan of His ministry. The similitude of the sower describes the various effects of the preaching, which is designed to lay the foundation of the kingdom. The divine word is sown like grain, which fructifies or remains unfruitful according to the nature of the soil which receives it. Everything depends on the moral disposition; the soul, according to the manner in which it listens, may resemble the stony ground, or the trodden highway where no seed can germinate, or the field of thorns and thistles, or the good ground which from a single grain brings forth a hundredfold.* The kingdom of God, thus founded by the word, may at any time be invaded by evil influences; tares are but too often sown in the field of God while the servants of the Father are slumbering and sleeping.† If the tares are not at once uprooted, it is because it does not appertain to man to distinguish with perfect certainty between the tares and the wheat. Both must await the time of harvest and the unerring eye of the Master. The parable of the net which gathers of all sorts from the sea, carries on the same thought under a new figure, and having especial reference to the final judgment. Those fishers, throwing back into the water the stones and the sand, enact the same part as the reapers in the previous parable (chap. xiii. 47–53). In spite of this inevitable and temporary admixture of good and evil, the kingdom of God is destined to a glorious development, like the grain of mustard seed, which is in its beginning the least of all seeds, but grows to a great and wide tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it (chap. xiii. 31, 32). The parable of the leaven, leavening little by little the whole lump, into which it has been cast, gives us the most faithful conception of the

* See Matt. xiii. 3; Mark iv. 3; Luke viii. 5.
† Matt. xiii. 25.

irresistible and pervasive influence of truth, which works only by persuasion, never by recourse to force and pressure from without. The truth, destined to so great a triumph, is worth its price; it is the pearl, or the hidden treasure, to gain which a man goes and sells all that he has (chap. xiii. 44–46).

The education of the disciples could not be properly completed without the teachings of experience; thus one of the principal means employed by Jesus to prepare them for their future mission was to make them the companions of His journeys. Practical lessons arose from each new incident; the most precious of all was the sight of His unwearying love and entire devotedness to His high vocation. Wishing to go over the eastern shores of the sea of Galilee, He entered into a fishing boat with the twelve. The weather is very changeable on this mountain-girt lake, over which storms often sweep down suddenly. Jesus was lying asleep "in the hinder part of the ship," when a violent tempest broke without warning upon the waters; awaked by the cries of His disciples, He rebuked the waves.* No sooner had He set foot on the coast than the occasion of a new miracle presented itself.

On the eastern shore the landscape wears an entirely new aspect; there is no longer a level, flowery path skirting smiling hills; abrupt and rocky, the shore rises from the margin of the lake; numbers of natural caves are hollowed out in the mountain sides. The whole country is wild and stern; its inhabitants then, as now, owned little subjection to law. They carried on without scruple a forbidden traffic, keeping herds of swine on their hills.† It was here that Jesus encountered the most terrible instance of possession, with which He had yet come in contact. The unhappy man believed himself the victim of a multitude of demons. Hence the strange name of *Legion*, by which he designated them. His hair and beard hung long and dishevelled in the agony of his terrible delusion; he went about unclothed, seeking refuge in the caverns and

* Luke viii. 22–25. † Luke viii. 32.

among the tombs, which seemed to him the natural abode of devils. He had doubtless learned from his contemporaries to identify the powers of darkness with the wandering spirits of the dead. In vain had he been "bound with chains and in fetters; he brake the bands and was driven of the devil into the wilderness." The cure of this man is attended with circumstances wholly inexplicable. According to our evangelists, his madness was communicated to a herd of swine, which were feeding by the lake.* It has been conjectured that in the last convulsion the unhappy man may have thrown himself upon these animals. In short, there can be no doubt that it was the demoniacal power of which he was the passive instrument, which by his means precipitated them into the lake. Just as the devil had before spoken by his mouth, it now acted by his hands. This convulsion appears to have been the final crisis, and the commencement of the cure.† In any case we must admit, that the inhabitants of this region deserved the punishment which they received for pursuing an illicit traffic. In their sordid avarice they did not hesitate to repel Jesus from their shores, and thus from the very first day forfeited all the blessings of His presence.

The eagerness of the Galilean people to welcome His return was a well-timed consolation for the mournful result of this enterprise. His popularity had not yet begun to ebb; He still had adherents among the highest ranks of the nation. A ruler of the synagogue of one of the little coast towns, named Jairus, came to seek Him by the shore of the lake, and was not afraid to ask of Him urgently and openly the recovery of his little daughter. As Jesus was going with him, a poor woman,

* Luke viii. 26–29; Mark v. 1–20; Matt. viii. 28–34. Matthew speaks of the healing of two demoniacs at Gadara instead of one.

† That these devils literally entered into the body of the swine is an inadmissible supposition; a developed intellect could not be enclosed in a lower organism. Let us not forget that cases of possession carry us into an abnormal region; this is a case of madness under demoniacal influence.

who had been a sufferer many years, came behind Him, and with a trembling hand touched His garment. Her trust in His power was so strong, that she believed it would be enough to approach Him and she should be healed. Jesus, looking at her faith rather than at her ignorance, which was still great and mingled with much superstition, suffered her to be healed by the means she had chosen, but laid stress at the same time on the moral act.* When he reached the house of Jairus, the rites over the dead had already begun; the court resounded with funereal hymns and noisy lamentations, according to the wont of those southern lands, where all the feelings of the soul are expressed with scenic display. "Why make ye such ado, and weep?" said Jesus, to those who were standing round, "she is not dead, but sleepeth."† In spite of the derision of the mourners, who knew beyond a question that the young girl had breathed her last, He ascended with His three most intimate disciples into the upper room where the child was laid, already habited for the tomb; He bade her arise, and restored her to her father, who himself had never doubted since the Master bade him fear nothing, only believe. "According to his faith it was done unto him."

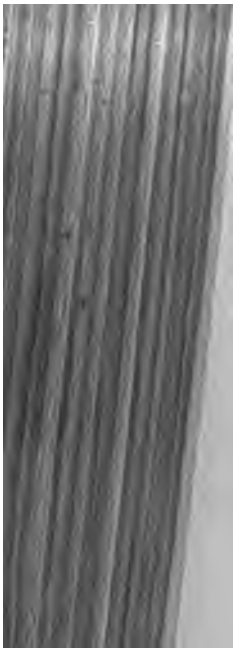
The apostles now know enough of their Master, of His doctrine, and His power, for Him to submit them to a severe ordeal. He sends them forth as His representatives to declare to their countrymen that the time is fulfilled. He does not desire them to go beyond the national circle, by which their thoughts are still bounded. If He sent them among the Gentiles, or even among the Samaritans, He would be giving them a commission to which they were as yet wholly unequal. For the present they have to learn by their own experience to what the witnesses of Christ are called, and the manner of their mission is laid down in imperishable outline by the

* "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke viii. 48).

† It is most unjust to extort from these words any intimation of merely apparent death. (Schleiermacher, "Leben Jesu," p. 233).

directions of the Master. An apostle is to go forth without money and without a sword; he is the champion of the invisible world, the soldier of a cause which asks no earthly weapons for its warfare. And yet he is invested with incomparable power. When he enters a house, he brings peace to it, but he leaves a blessing or a curse, according as his message is received or rejected. Woe to the towns against which he is bidden to shake off the dust of his feet.* All unarmed as he is, he is none the less sent forth into a terrible conflict. He is a lamb in the midst of wolves. Such a testimony as his must needs be sealed by suffering and often by death. "Men shall deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, and for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.†" The servant is not greater than his lord; and they have called the master of the house Beelzebub. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Yet more, it is not necessary for the condemnation of the servants of Christ that they should have kings and councils against them; they will find hatred seated by their own hearths; the sword of the Spirit severs the most tender and sacred ties; a great fire has just been kindled to consume iniquity, and no man shall be able to quench it. It is not peace, but a sword, which Jesus brings to the world.‡ Those who enrol themselves under such a leader must be ready to sacrifice the most cherished affections. The cross must be borne daily by the true disciple, before it is planted in the earth to be watered by his blood. Yet let the witnesses of Christ go forth fearing nothing. They are His representatives; whatever is done to them is done to Himself, and He will repay a glass of water given to them, as though it had refreshed His own thirsty lips.§ The Spirit of God rests upon them; He will speak through their mouth when

* Matt. x. 9–15.
† Ὡς πρόβατα ἐν μέσῳ λύκων (Matt. x. 16).
‡ Matt. x. 34. § Matt. x. 41–42.



Head, of whom it l
all they that can be
own manner the wh
when he says, "The
The execution of Jo
time, confirmed all t
a faithful confessor o
much in order to pr
looked for by His ow

The apostles did
much reproach or per
had charged them had
they were not called
since they addressed
beyond a general anno
This first mission, howe
to proclaim without fea
knowledge deepened, t
fraught with peril. Let
thus preparing them for
methods, adapted to thei
how long this first jour

CHAPTER IV.

THE CRISIS OF FAITH IN GALILEE.

I. The Multiplication of the Loaves at Bethsaida Julias.

WE know already with what feelings the Pharisees regard the new doctrine. If the mass of the Galilean population is not yet unfavourable to Jesus, there is more than one indication that it may easily become so. Are not the multitude ever unstable as water, and blown about by the most variable winds? In one city Jesus already meets with violent opposition; this is in the town where He passed His childhood. In vain does He make a fresh appeal to His countrymen in the same synagogue, where He had before been so ill received. His fellow-townsmen are always stumbled by His obscure origin; they cannot believe that from the workshop of the poor carpenter Joseph, and from the midst of that humble family of artisans, known to all the town, Messiah could arise, as though the excellency of divine power was not enhanced by these very contrasts. Jesus withdrew from them sorrowfully, repeating the often-verified proverb, "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country."* Capernaum, the city of His adoption, became only too soon the rival of Nazareth in ingratitude. Jesus sought to retire into a desert place with His apostles, soon after their return from their triumphant mission. He desired no doubt to teach them by what means the servant of the truth escapes the pride of success, and girds himself in retirement for new conflicts. He crossed with them to the

* Matt. xiii. 57.

other side of the lake, into the neighbourhood of the second Bethsaida, or Bethsaida Julias. The country was much less populous on this shore than in the rich district of Gennesaret. Jesus ascended a mountain with His disciples.* He might have been about to confirm them in their apostolic office, now they better knew what was involved in it. But soon there arrived from the opposite shore a great number of people who had not hesitated to follow Jesus on foot,† so eager were they to hear His word, and yet more to see His miracles. It was a mingled multitude of men, women and children, with the ordinary contingent of sufferers in various need of healing.

It was spring time, for the Passover was nigh at hand,‡ and the crowd sat down on the springing grass. Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitudes whom He saw "scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." Words of mercy flowed freely from His lips. § "He laid hands upon the sick and they recovered." Hours passed away, a very day of heaven upon earth; no one thought of the necessities of the body, and when the evening was come and it was too late to recross the lake, the disciples became aware of a hungry, exhausted crowd, without the means of supplying their wants. What are the five barley loaves and two small fishes, which a lad has brought in his basket, among five thousand men? It is too late to think of going into the towns and villages to buy bread; beside, the money is wanting. The disciples would gladly send away the multitude; but Jesus, so tender over the miseries of the soul, cannot be callous to the claims of the body; no suffering is indifferent to Him: His love deserves truly that beautiful name of *humanity*, which implies sympathetic succour for all human griefs. Thus He does not hesitate to work a miracle to appease the hunger of the famished crowd. He who refused in the wilderness to change stones into bread for His own support, multiplies with a touch the five loaves and two fishes, till the

* John vi. 3. † Πεζῇ (Matt. xiv. 13). ‡ John vi. 4.
§ Ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς πολλά (Mark vi. 34.)

vast concourse is satisfied. None of the miracles of Jesus is more full of tender significance than this. It is the brilliant inauguration of that fruitful miracle of Christian charity, which has ever since gone on multiplying bread to the hungry. The heart of man, once touched, like the rock in the desert struck by the rod of Moses, has gone on pouring over thirsty crowds the inexhaustible stream of generosity.

The multitudes are ravished, enthusiastic; now indeed they believe they have found the Messiah after their own heart—Him, who according to the brilliant representation of their apocalypses, is to make Judæa an earthly paradise, flowing literally with milk and honey, its trees bending under the marvellous weight of fruit. The people would "take him by force and make him a king;"* but He withdraws Himself from their fanatic enthusiasm, and retires into a mountain alone. He will not have even the company of His disciples; in silent communion He will prepare Himself for striking that great blow, which will dispel all these popular illusions. The apostles re-enter their boat alone, while He treads the deserted shore. But the wind begins to rise, and tosses the waves around the little vessel; the disciples are already alarmed by the storm, when they see Jesus coming to them on the waters; they are terrified, and suppose it is a spirit, till they catch the reassuring word—"It is I, be not afraid!" Then Peter, yielding to an impetuous feeling, sets his foot too upon the wave to go to meet the Master, but having more fervour than faith, he would assuredly have sunk if a helping hand had not been timely stretched out to hold him up.† Perhaps this memorable event came back to his mind in that other night, when his presumption would have led him to a yet deeper fall if the same hand had not arrested him. This tempest-wrought lake, this tiny, tossing boat, the Master appearing to make a great calm within and without—what a sublime parable in

* John vi. 15.
† Matt. xiv. 27. Compare Mark vi. 45–54; John vi. 15–21.

action! It is the very history of the Church in all ages. How often, at the moment when her bark has seemed to be foundering, driven by the rude wind of persecution, has she not heard again the divine voice, mightier in its gentleness than all the thunders of the storm!

On the morrow, from the dawn of day, the lake was seen covered with a multitude of boats come from Tiberias and Bethsaida to bring back the people, who the day before had followed Jesus by such toilsome marches; these eagerly entered into any vessels they could secure, so as to arrive at the same time with Him in the country of Gennesaret. Since the miracle of the loaves, their ardent impatience knew no bounds. They found the divine prophet in the synagogue at Capernaum, for the Sabbath had begun.

The occasion was favourable for dispelling the carnal and dangerous illusions of a mistaken multitude. That such was the intention of Jesus is evident from His first words. "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles (the signs of my mission), but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."* It was not possible to aim a blow more bold and direct at the materialism disguised under the semblance of religion. Founding His teaching for the day on the miracle of which all minds were full, Jesus endeavours to raise His hearers to the great spiritual realities. "Labour," He says, "not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed."† Miracle is a divine seal designed to make Him known; there must then be no stopping short at the material advantage which it procures, but a recognition of it sa the august sign of the mission of the Son of man, who alone is able to satisfy the hunger of the soul, and to give unto it eternal life. Upon this commences a brief and perfectly natural dialogue between Jesus and the people, in which the Jews give clearer expression than they have yet done to their

* Ὅτι ἐχορτάσθητε. (John vi. 26). † John vi. 27.

dissatisfaction. Their objections strike, as it were, from the words of the Master a light growing ever more intense, but also more insufferable to their darkened eyes. They ask in what the work is to consist, which has eternal life for its reward. They understand the words of Christ in a mercenary sense, and imagine that the question is one of good works, alms-giving, and rites scrupulously observed. What a scandal is it to be told that saving work is simply faith in Christ, the humble surrender of the soul to Him.* Let Him then, at least, work a dazzling miracle to attest His right to such confidence. Moses brought down miraculous bread from heaven. Let Him who pretends to be the prophet like unto Moses vindicate His claim by a similar prodigy!† It is clear that those present are still engrossed with the event of the previous evening.

Jesus takes hold of this incident in the history of Israel. The manna nourished only the body, and could not preserve it from death. The true bread from heaven is that which God gives to the world; and it may be known by this, that it comes down from heaven and gives eternal life. "Evermore give us this bread," exclaim the Jews, snatching at some vague carnal hope. Jesus replies, "I am the bread of life."‡ Then He goes on to describe, in a few words, His mission to souls. Whoever obeys the divine instinct which is in him, and by which God Himself draws him to the Son; whoever looks upon the Saviour with the eye of faith, has even now everlasting life, and awaits only the resurrection.§

The indignant murmuring of the Jews shows that they understood what was the supreme dignity thus claimed by this Jesus, in whom they persist in seeing the son of Joseph. Even the natural light of the mind seems darkened in them; but what

* Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσητε εἰς ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ἐκεῖνος (John vi. 29).

† Deut. xviii. 18.

‡ Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (John vi. 35).

§ John vi. 37–58.

marvel? Does it not need a higher sense to behold divine things? God must be taken for the guide, and His voice be heard in the secret of the heart, before men come to Him who is His representative. But when His teaching is refused, He cannot be known in His highest manifestation. "No man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father."* Again Jesus repeats, in a still more offensive form, the saying which had already exasperated His hearers, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." In reply to a fresh murmuring of the Jews, He insists yet more emphatically on the same thought. The bread to be eaten is His immolated flesh; the drink to be drunk is His blood. Thus, He who gives life is not only a meek and lowly Messiah, but also a Messiah crucified; and this is He who must be received and appropriated by faith, as intimately as the body assimilates the bread which becomes part of its proper substance. "He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."†

These bold metaphors, so closely interwoven with the incidents of the dialogue, and with the miracle itself which called them forth, cannot be taken in a material sense. Jesus sets aside every such interpretation, when He adds, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing";‡ The thought which He presents is in its very essence an occasion of scandal and irritation. Men are asking for signs of power from Him; and here is humiliation and sacrifice. They desire to see the kingdom of God set up with sudden glory, and behold a victim-Messiah. The work of salvation is not to

* John vi. 46.

† Ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα, ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον (John vi. 54.)

‡ Τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ ζωοποιοῦν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν (John vi. 63. Clearly it is quite incorrect to see in the preceding words any allusion to the Lord's supper. They refer to the great fact of which that is the symbol, that is to say, to the thing signified and not to the sign. An absurd inversion is involved in the contrary supposition.

consist in lofty deeds, wrought to deliver the theocracy from its oppressors; heaven is not to be won by the boasted merits of legal sanctity; no, salvation is faith in this "Man of sorrows," and participation in His utter humiliation. It is true that He says He is come down from heaven, and will return to heaven again; but this glory must needs be discerned by faith beneath the sanguinary veil of a broken body; and this assertion of a grandeur not to be perceived by carnal eyes, is as hard to be received as the humiliation and suffering. Assuredly it was not possible to sweep away more unsparingly the delusions of the people, or more effectually to crush all their carnal expectations. We are not surprised, then, to hear the exclamation of the listeners, "This is a hard saying!" They felt the point of the sword which Jesus came to bring into the world. No doubt they had only a cloudy comprehension of the profound doctrine He uttered, but they understood enough to be offended at it. Jesus is left standing alone, while the multitude retreat like an ebbing tide. Only one little group remains and to this He turns, asking with an unutterable sadness in His voice, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Peter exclaims; "Thou hast the words of eternal life." A noble declaration from the depth of that manly, though yet unstable heart. Thus true faith grows and strengthens in the very crisis in which all merely seeming faith succumbs. And yet at this very hour Jesus utters the gloomy prophecy, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"* It is probable that Judas himself has begun, with consternation, to see his ambitious dreams fading away, and to feel the first stirring of bitter hatred against the Master by whom he fancies himself deceived. However this may be, the hour of darkness has sounded; the time of public favour is over; henceforward Jesus will meet with but passing returns of popularity.

We now enter upon the second period of His ministry, which is that of declared conflict.

* John vi. 67–71.

BOOK FOURTH.

Period of Conflict.

CHAPTER I.

DELEGATES SENT BY THE PHARISEES AT JERUSALEM INTO GALILEE. JOURNEY INTO THE LANDS OF THE NORTH. FROM THE SPRING OF THE YEAR OF ROME 782 TO THE AUTUMN OF THE SAME YEAR.

I. First Intrigues of the Pharisees in Galilee.

After the late events in Nazareth and Capernaum, Jesus could not as heretofore, go about Galilee. He would not again make a regular sojourn there, but would only pass through the country, avoiding large gatherings of the people (Mark ix. 30.)

The Pharisees did not fail to take advantage of this new mood of the people; throughout the length and breadth of the country, their adherents were united in close fellowship, and communications were frequent between Jerusalem and Galilee. The chiefs of the party had sent emissaries to the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret to act as spies upon Jesus (Mark vii. 1). These knew well how to work with rare skill, upon the first symptoms of popular disfavour. To serve the ends of religious hatred, the Pharisees violated without scruple the rights of hospitality so universally respected in the East. That which the Arab brigand would not do under his tent, they practised in their consecrated dwellings. They only invited Jesus to be their

guest in order to lay snares for Him. Once, when He was sitting at table with them, they expressed clamorous indignation on seeing that He and His disciples dispensed with the absurd ceremonies, with which they had overlaid the laws concerning ablutions.* Here again their insistance upon the outward form of religion was the more resolute in proportion to the disregard of true piety. It was not enough for them to wash their hands before meat; they must needs plunge the arm up to the elbow in water, and in like manner purify all the domestic utensils. They were bound to repeat these practises every time they returned from the street or market, lest they should have involuntarily contracted any defilement. It well becomes these contemners of the law to set themselves as its defenders. With great severity Jesus says to them, "Ye make the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." †

Contrasting eternal morality with the artificial morality of these false devotees, He takes up the defence of those natural feelings which they unjustly accuse Him of sacrificing. Have they not taught children to fail in their first duty, authorising them to divert for the service of the altar, the consecrated gold which ought to provide for the needs of parents? With reference to ablutions, Jesus sets forth with a manly simplicity the great fact, that true defilement comes not from without, but from within—from the impure fountains of the human heart, whence proceed lusts and all evil thoughts. He closes by painting in colours of fire the hypocrisy of his constant adver-

* I have brought together here all that relates to the plotting of the Pharisees against Jesus in Galilee. The incidents are recorded with some confusion in the synoptics We take as a foundation. the narrative in Mark vii. 1–23, which evidently relates to this period, The discussion concerning ablutions is reproduced with some variations in Luke xi. 39–41. We have then the demand for a sign, (Mark viii. 11, 12), which has its parallel in Luke xi. 29–32. We find an analogous account in Matthew xii. 38–42. It is possible that the scene occurred twice. In any case the reply of Jesus was the same.

† *Καλῶς ἀθετεῖτε τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν τηρήσητε.* (Mark vii. 9).

saries. We shall meet with this immortal picture of Pharisaism, in a form yet more complete and terrible, in the last discourses of Jesus. One feature, however, appears to belong positively to this period; it is that which closes the discussion on ablutions, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?"*

Some time after, the same emissaries from Jerusalem presented themselves anew before Jesus to ask of Him a decisive sign of His mission. The Sanhedrim thus played the part which is now demanded of our learned bodies; they required a miracle wrought before their delegates. "Jesus sighed deeply in spirit," records the most exact of the Evangelists.† Such a demand showed in truth an utter and arrant misconception of His whole character and mission. He is ready, indeed, to respond to the cry of the sick and the suffering who supplicate His power to heal; He listens to the voice of tears, and grants a miraculous answer of love to the appeal of faith; but He will never consent to work a prodigy in order to establish His authority before a proud hierarchy, and a people hungering only for the marvellous; such a concession might befit a magician or an impostor, but Jesus never confounds lowliness with degradation; He ever maintains the royal dignity of truth. He knows, beside, that the simply marvellous is a dazzling veil which conceals, more than it reveals the divine, while the miracle, by its moral character, touches the well-affected heart. Therefore He refuses with indignation the request thus presented to Him. "There shall no sign be given to this generation but the sign of the prophet Jonah." Did not the mere preaching of that prophet suffice to bring Nineveh to repentance? "Behold a greater than Jonah is here"—One greater even than the pacific king, who drew the Queen of Sheba from the far East to the holy city to listen to his wisdom. The pre-eminent

* Luke xi. 39, 40. † Ἀναστενάξας τῷ πνεύματι (Mark viii. 12).

sign is the character of Jesus Himself. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, and hearts in which the sense of the divine is not quenched, will by this sign acknowledge Him. We are thus led into the deep truths propounded in the fourth Gospel. The history of Jonah is to Jesus the type of his own destiny. He also is to go down into the deep places of the earth, and to come back again to the light of day. He appeals to this coming sign as the confirmation of all His teaching, and the setting as it were of the seal of God on His work. His death and resurrection do not in truth come into the category of purely external signs; they are great redemptive acts, the highest manifestation of His being. Thus the reply of Jesus Christ to the demand for a miracle was the same in Galilee, as in the temple of Jerusalem at the opening of His ministry. In both cases He gives His resurrection as the ultimate seal of His mission. It is certain that He could not be perfectly understood by his hearers; but it must not be forgotten that He was speaking not for the passing hour alone, but for all time. If He had used only words immediately intelligible to the circle which surrounded Him, His teaching would have been singularly contracted.*

Scenes like those which have just been narrated, were soon known throughout the country. The family of Jesus was uneasy at the growing opposition of the Jews, and at the prolonged labours which seemed likely to exhaust Him. His relatives imagined that he was losing the mastery of Himself, and that His enthusiasm was verging on madness. In truth Jesus was infected with that generous madness of love which takes no reckoning of either pain or danger. One day when

* There has been much dispute as to the authenticity of the passage in Matt. xii. 40, which alludes to the resurrection. It is certain that it breaks to some extent the thread of thought, but as it raises no critical difficulty, it may not be withdrawn without admitting altogether arbitrary distinctions. It must be regarded as a sublime parenthesis, which carries its own commendation to the mind, as we have remarked before in reference to John ii. 19.

His brethren endeavoured with ill-judged persistency to drive Him from His customary activities, He exclaimed, pointing to those who surrounded Him, and who appear to have been intently receiving the divine word, "Behold my mother and my brethren."*

The Master draws two lessons for the disciples from the events which have just past. "Beware," He warns them, "of the leaven of the Pharisees."† Then, he adds, as though to re-assure the hearts of his timid followers, who might tremble at the thought of breaking openly with so powerful a party, "I say unto you, my friends, fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more which they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea I say unto you, fear him."‡

II. Journey into the lands of the North.

After the events just narrated, Jesus retired for a time into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. These two cities, so long eminent in commerce and in war, were to the Jewish people like the advanced posts of pagan civilisation; in their wealth and luxury they formed the strongest contrast with the Jewish nationality, inclosed within narrow boundaries, and cut off from other nations by severest restrictions. Tyre and Sidon had been great capitals of commerce; there had been developed the adventurous genius of the Phœnicians, whose vessels furrowed all known seas, to pour the treasures of the world at the feet of their monstrous idols. These cities were much fallen into decay at the time of Christ. They had lost their independence. Tyre had never recovered from the ter-

* Ἰδε ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί μου (Mark iii. 34).

† Mark viii. 15.

‡ Luke xii. 4, 5. It is doubtless on this text that Renan founds his assertion, that Jesus never observed a distinction between body and soul.

rible siege laid against it by Alexander; Sidon, which yielded sooner, had suffered less. These two cities (held, like all Eastern Asia, under the yoke of Rome,) still retained some splendour, thanks to their noble situation on the shores of the Mediterranean; and the relations between them and the Jews became frequent. Asiatic paganism, the worship of infamous and cruel divinities, still exercised over them its corrupting influence. Their inhabitants were not yet ripe for the great evangelical call; Jesus only passed through their country, but His passage was marked by a miracle, which was in itself a declaration that national barriers were about to be levelled. It was not wrought, like that at Capernaum, on behalf of a Roman centurion, already a proselyte of the synagogue, and almost incorporated with the holy nation: we are no longer in Samaria, on ground half-consecrated, and still owning the worship of the one God. No, everything in these spots speaks of unblushing paganism; impure sanctuaries in honour of the Phœnician Hercules stand on all sides. By acting as Messiah on this unholy soil, Jesus makes a decisive advance, the importance of which is yet more enhanced by the attendant circumstances.

A poor woman of Canaan, who has doubtless heard the rumours of the great events which have been transpiring in Judæa, throws herself at His feet. She is a mother, supplicating for her daughter who is grievously vexed with a devil. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" is her piteous cry. The Master keeps silence, till His disciples grow impatient at the importunity of the woman. Yet more and more urgently she pleads, and receives for only answer the words, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs."* It seems as though Jesus would show the ancient privilege of the Jew in all its inflexible rigour, to prove this daughter of an idolatrous people, and to give yet more solemn emphasis to the act He is about to perform.

* Matt. xv. 26.

Never did faith show more holy hardihood than in this unhappy mother. "Truth, Lord:" she replies, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Here is, indeed, a prayer which, as has been eloquently said, is stronger than God Himself.* Thrilled by so touching a confidence in His love, Jesus no longer delays to work the desired cure. Thus is the door of the Gentile world opened to the Gospel by the suppliant hands of a poor woman. This was a great day in the evangelical annals.

From Sidon, Jesus repairs to the north-east of the Lake of Gennesaret, into Decapolis. This province was so called from the number of its towns, which had formed themselves into a confederation, according to the Greek custom. The Gospels assign to this journey the healing of one deaf and dumb, and a second multiplication of the loaves, occurring in circumstances similar to those which led to it on the previous occasion. Jesus then repairs to Bethsaida Julias, where He heals a blind man.† From thence He goes northward, near the sources of the Jordan, as far as Cæsarea Philippi. All around this city extends the fertile plain of Hûleh, enclosed between the wooded mountains of Naphtali and the slopes of snowy Hermon. The Jordan divides itself into numerous streamlets, which flow among the oleanders; it then loses itself wholly in the beautiful sheet of the Lake Merom. The two principal sources of the river are at Dan and Cæsarea Philippi, the modern Banias. The imposing ruins of the latter city attest its ancient greatness. An idea may be formed of what it was in the times of Christ, by uncovering with the foot the mural fragments, which lie overgrown with luxuriant vegetation at the foot of the ravine. The tetrarch Philip greatly embellished it, and gave

* Adolphe Monod, "Sermon sur la Cananéenne."

† Matt. xv. 32, Mark viii. 1–9. There is no confusion in the synoptics about the two miracles of the loaves. Jesus clearly distinguishes them (Mark viii. 19). They differ in the locality in which they were wrought, in their date, and in the circumstances accompanying them.

to it his own name; it was previously called Paneas, because the neighbouring mountain was consecrated to the god Pan. Its population was in great part pagan.

Jesus took advantage of this quiet time with His disciples, to ask them what were men's thoughts about Him, in the countries through which they had just passed. The apostles replied that the people saw in Him one of the old prophets, whose return was looked for at the epoch of Messiah.* "And whom say ye that I am?" asked the Master. "Thou art the Christ of God,"† exclaims Peter, in one of those ecstasies of faith which raise him for the moment above himself, and reveal that ardent courage which characterises all the mighty men of action and enthusiasm. It is now that he receives for the second time that name which so admirably describes him; "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."‡

This is the first mention of the Church; its foundation was in truth laid in this recognition of the exalted dignity of Christ. Peter has spoken the word or the truth, which is its foundation, its keystone and bulwark; this word binds or looses, saves or condemns; it possesses the power of the divine life which it reveals. It preserves the same character by whatever mouth it is spoken. Therefore it is, that in this same Gospel, the power of the keys, the privilege of binding and loosing is confided, not to Peter only, but to all the disciples,§ for is not to be supposed that a discourse, which throughout treats of the most elementary duties of the Christian life, was not

* Matt. xvi. 14.
† Τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (Luke ix. 20.)
‡ Matt. xvi. 18-20.
§ Matt. xviii. 18.

addressed to all believers. Thus is wholly set aside anything like the institution of an official primacy, which would make a man the sovereign dispenser of God's pardons. To Peter belongs, nevertheless, the honour of having been the first to give utterance to the creative word of the Church, and of having displayed in action, that great quality of conquering energy, which procured for him a moral supremacy at Jerusalem.

Hardly has the son of Jonas made this declaration, which called forth the signal approval of the Master, when mistaken words succeed to this noble testimony on his lips. At the first allusion of Jesus to His approaching sufferings and humiliation, the apostle protests with indignation, and draws down on himself the terrible rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan."* If the Church had no more stable basis than the impulsive heart of a man, it is evident how frail would be her foundation. It is a distinctive feature of the greatness of Christ that, at the very moment when His glory is proclaimed, he speaks of His sacrifice. The amazement of His disciples proves how much they have need of this teaching, for if they were dimly conscious of the dignity of their Master, they were very far from comprehending by what a path of sorrow it was to be attained. This is the sole reason why He prohibits them from proclaiming Him as Messiah.† He alone is able to assert His rightful title without conceding anything to the superstitions of His nation.

To the north of Cæsarea Philippi, the magnificent chain of Great Hermon rears itself to heaven; it commands the whole country. It was on one of the mountains which form part of

* Matt. xvi. 23.

† I will not repeat what I have already said in reference to Baur, Schenkel, and Colani's notion as to the time when Jesus knew Himself to be Messiah. I have shown that we have no proof of such a fact in the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi. It does not follow, because Jesus forbade His disciples to proclaim a truth which they did not clearly comprehend, that He might not Himself proclaim it, as He had certainly not the same cause for silence.

this range, that the mysterious scene of the Transfiguration took place.* Every sound of earth dies at the foot of this lofty retreat, so truly worthy of the prayer of Christ. On all sides rugged peaks are seen rising from the middle of the plain, through which, half hidden by the tall herbage, flows the sacred stream—the witness of so many miracles. It was, probably, in the calm, still hour that comes before evening that Jesus ascended the mountain. He was accompanied by three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John. Suddenly His form and His raiment were enwrapt in so glistening a brightness that, in the simple expression of St. Mark, no fuller on earth could produce its like. Here is something more than the radiance of a heavenly soul occasionally seen on a human countenance, more than one of those glances, which, like lightning-flashes of the soul, reveal its moral beauty. The Transfiguration was a manifestation of a higher order. In this marvellous light, Moses and Elias appeared, and talked with Jesus of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Thus, while false Judaism rejects the Messiah, the true owns and adores Him in the persons of its two most illustrious representatives. The old covenant and the new meet together on the glorious mount, as righteousness and peace shall soon meet on that other hill which is already before the eye of Jesus.

The laws which govern the world of blessed spirits lie too wholly beyond our comprehension, for us to attempt any explanation of this appearance of Moses and Elias. The apostles, doubtless, heard on their awaking, some words of this mysterious interview; they were thus enabled to recognise the two great prophets.† Peter would fain prolong this hour of heaven

* Tradition erroneously places the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor. Jesus was at this time in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. xiv. 13; comp. xvii. 1). A fortress stood upon the summit of Tabor, which would ill accord with the scene described.

† We observe that the conversation takes place before the three disciples recognise Moses and Elias (Luke ix. 31).

upon earth, and set up tents on that shining summit, but a cloud descended upon the three disciples, and they feared as they entered into it, for now it was no more Moses or Elias whom they heard, but a divine voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him."*

In what manner these ineffable things were seen and heard it is impossible to say; to the three apostles might be applied the words of St. Paul on his visions of the third heaven, "Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth."† For the disciples, the Transfiguration was intended to illuminate with a ray of glory the dark days that were about to begin; it was designed also to strengthen Jesus for His conflict. It was His first watch before the battle, the second would be passed in Gethsemane. This sacred scene was to be kept secret by the three apostles till after His resurrection.

After a short conversation in which He tells them that John the Baptist was indeed "Elias which was to come," He descends the mountain with them. How strong is the contrast awaiting them! Above, they had seen heaven coming down to earth; below, in the plain, they beheld one of the most fearful consequences of sin; a poor child was there, writhing in demoniac frenzy, more terrible, perhaps, in its symptoms even than that of the sufferer of Gadara, and beside him stood a despairing father, who had vainly sought aid from the disciples. They had essayed to cure the child, but could not. Hence the grief and holy indignation of the Master at their culpable impotence. "O faithless generation," He exclaimed, "how long shall I be with you?"‡ Even the most sacred words cannot alone exorcise the power of evil; prayer and fasting, the holy elevation of the soul which seeks its strength in God, this is the secret of victory. A glorious deliverance was granted to the still tremulous, but humbly trustful faith of the poor father, who spoke that day for every troubled, trembling heart of man when he

* Luke ix. 35. † 2 Cor. xii. 3. ‡ Mark ix. 19.

exclaimed with tears, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."* Immediately on the conclusion of the miracle, Jesus gave a second intimation of His approaching end: "Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men."† Thus the most various scenes succeed each other; suffering follows glory, and sometimes goes hand and hand with it. Such is the rhythm of the Gospel history.

A few other incidents belong to this period, in which Jesus devotes Himself with redoubled care to the education of His apostles. In their simple pride, they dispute about priority of place. The Master sets a little child in the midst of them.‡ Such an one is in His eyes the type of that true greatness which consists in transparent simplicity and artless affection. With humility He also inculcates breadth of spirit; He will not suffer the man to be condemned who, though not walking with His followers, yet works miracles in His name, for the allegiance of the soul is of more value in His eyes than outward adherence.§ He is not come to form a sect, but a church. Large hearts are full of kindness and pity; He desires His disciples to take especial heed lest they despise or offend one of the little ones.‖ The pardon extended should not be meted by scantier measure than the pardon freely received. What right has the servant, to whom his master has forgiven a mighty debt, to insist mercilessly on the payment of a few pence from his fellow-servant?¶ Life thus regarded is one long conflict with sin, from which the soldiers come out scarred and maimed, for the very eye must be plucked out, and foot or hand be cut off, if they cause us to stumble or fall.** These bold images are designed to set forth that crucifixion of the inner man which St. Paul urges in no less emphatic language. Such a work cannot be accomplished without preternatural strength. Jesus revealed the secret of this strength to His disciples. One day, as they watched Him

* Mark ix. 24. † Luke ix. 44. ‡ Luke ix. 47.
§ Mark ix. 38–40. ‖ Matt. xviii. 10. ¶ Matt. xviii. 21–35.
** Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

in prayer, they felt that they did not yet truly know what it was to pray, and asked Him to impart to them this divine lesson. It was then that He gave them, not a formulary, but a perfect model of prayer in that universal petition, which for eighteen centuries has carried to heaven so many aspirations, and wrought so many deliverances in the earth.* The Lord's Prayer is unapproachable in its simplicity and completeness; it embraces all the necessities of renewed man, from the sublime need of blessing the heavenly Father, and of concurring by obedience and holiness in the advancement of His kingdom, to the lower need of daily bread. Pardon for past transgression, strength to overcome in present temptation; all is included. Humble supplication and wrestling entreaty melt into the one final ascription of worship, "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever." Such a prayer is like the viaticum of the Christian traveller amidst all the perils of the way.

* Luke xi. 1-5

CHAPTER II.

SOJOURN AT JERUSALEM ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. (AUTUMN OF YEAR OF ROME, 782.)

JESUS had not revisited Jerusalem since His return into Galilee at the beginning of the year. If He had gone thither sooner the final crisis would have been hastened, and He would not have been able to sow the seed of the word in so many towns and villages. But now He was kept back by no consideration of popular favour; open conflict would be better than slow alienation, paving the way for hatred. There is no reason for supposing that this stay at Jerusalem effected any change in His mind and purpose. It was not the first time He had visited the holy city, and contemplated the solemn landscape around it. Let us not exaggerate the gloom of this prospect. Doubtless, the high country of Judæa never arrayed itself in glory like Carmel and Tabor; it was never vocal with the murmuring of waters like the valley of the Jordan; but it was far from wearing, at the time of Christ, the aspect of wild desolation which it presents in our day. The Cedron was not then a dry, stony bed; it diffused fruitfulness all around. The Mount of Olives, which rose facing the Temple, had many a concealed retreat of verdure; its summit commanded one of the grandest landscapes of Palestine, terminated on the south by the glimmering of the Dead Sea, and on the east by the blue-grey heights of Moab, often enkindled by the fiery splen-

dours of the sun. The numerous tombs, scattered over the hill in its decline to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, did not rise then from the midst of heaps of accumulated ruins, overgrown with briars and weeds. Their white outlines dotted the verdure of the slope. Jerusalem itself was a noble city, into which a large population crowded, and which was crowned by the grand and severe proportions of the Temple. There was, then, nothing in the external circumstances calculated to effect a radical change in the mind of Jesus, even were it admitted that the soul could ever be degraded into such abject subjection to natural influences. Let it be remembered, too, that the ministry of Christ began on the desolate shores of the Dead Sea, and that it was from the burning deserts of Judæa He came forth to inaugurate the year of goodwill. We know already that Jesus had not restrained till now the manifestation of what is called His mad excitement; for in Galilee He had already declared Himself to be the bread from heaven—the immortal food of the soul; already had he begun that insistance upon the virtue of His own person which is made the reproach of this closing period.

The Feast of Tabernacles, which took place in October, was approaching; it was one of the great religious festivals of Judaism. In memory of the wandering life of the desert, the people set up leafy booths in the streets of Jerusalem, and dwelt in them seven days. With palm branches in their hands, they walked in long processions, magnifying the goodness of God to their forefathers. Jesus did not arrive in Judæa at the commencement of the feast. He had refused to yield to the urgency of His brethren, when, in accordance with their national prejudices, they pressed Him to seize this opportunity to show Himself with power. He knew well that His enemies would be exasperated at seeing Him arrive with the caravans from Galilee, which would not fail to form a *cortège* around Him. His brethren could not foresee anything to fear in such contingencies, sharing as they did in the carnal expectations of

their nation.* The Master, therefore, allows Himself to be preceded at Jerusalem by His kinsfolk and disciples, while He himself follows as it were in secret.†

The feast had already lasted some days when He arrived. The people were in a state of extraordinary excitement; Jesus was the subject of conversation in every group; His character and works were discussed, and according to the animus of the speakers He was pronounced to be a good man or a deceiver of the people.‡ Excitement reached its height when He suddenly appeared in the Temple.§ His very first words were marked by that tone of authority peculiar to Him, and which was supremely impressive in this centre of vain disputations and empty words. A dialogue commences between Him and those around Him, which indicates the various attitudes of mind, and the diverse and fluctuating impressions of His hearers. The paramount feeling is astonishment. Such divine wisdom is incomprehensible in a man who has not passed through the rabbinical schools. Jesus tells them that His is no human and acquired learning; His doctrine is of God, and He speaks only the words of Him who sent Him. This celestial wisdom does not manifest itself by means of laboured argument; it reveals itself directly to the conscience. The man who will do the will of God shall know that the doctrine is of God, for the absolute disinterestedness of Him who proclaims it, proves that He is not seeking Himself, nor doing His own work, but that He is indeed the organ of divine love. Jesus appeals, according to His invariable wont, from the tor-

* Jesus, in consequence of His tardy arrival, could not celebrate the feast according to the customary rites.

† Ἐν κρυπτῷ (John vii. 10). This solitary journey does not seem to agree with that mentioned in Luke ix. 51, which has a certain publicity about it (Luke ix. 52). The account of the third Gospel better suits the next journey, in which Jesus took solemn leave of the lands through which He had so often passed. We agree entirely on this point with Neander, Lange, and M. Godet, in opposition to Wieseler.

‡ John vii. 12, 13. § John vii. 14

tuous scholasticism of the doctors to the true intuition of the soul.*

The Master probably discerns in the crowd some of those Jews who had been scandalised by the miracle wrought at Bethesda. He knows that in opposition to the verdict of the upright conscience which He claims, they set His pretended violation of the Sabbath; they dispute His true holiness in the name of artificial and conventional piety. He meets their thoughts in a direct and pointed manner. These pretended defenders of the law have not truly understood the law. Did not Moses authorise circumcision on the Sabbath day, thus placing a patriarchal institution above a formal command of the Decalogue? There are, then, laws paramount to legal observance; now all that contributes to the good of man forms part of this eternal code. Who will dare to dispute that it is more important to make a man altogether whole than to circumcise him?† This bold and searching speech astonishes the listeners all the more, because they know what issues are pending: will the rulers indeed believe that this is the very Christ, and cease seeking to kill Him? But conviction is only transitory; the objection to His low and obscure origin at once recurs. They know too well whence He comes: "Ye both know me and ye know whence I come," replied Jesus, with solemn irony; and to these men who look only at earthly things, and are offended by the workshop of Nazareth, He shows the heaven whence He descends. Some are moved by so much dignity, but the majority remain hostile. The Pharisees are assembled in the council-chamber, for it must be decided whether this Galilean Teacher is to be suffered to supplant them in the very midst of the feast; they hasten to take advantage of the variable mood of the crowd; their emissaries are prepared to seize Jesus at the first favourable moment. He, meanwhile, preserving His royal serenity, declares to the people that the light

* These observations are a paraphrase of John vii. 16–19.
† John vii. 22, 23. See Godet.

which had been granted for a time was soon to be withdrawn, and that the day would come when they would bitterly repent having rejected their Deliverer.* His warnings are no better understood than His promises.

Every morning, during the feast, a priest came down from the holy mountain, with a golden vessel in his hand, to draw water from the famous fountain of Siloam, at the foot of Moriah; he returned in the midst of a great concourse of people, to the sound of psalms and trumpets, and concluded the ceremony by pouring the water from his golden vessel over the altar.† This rite was designed to commemorate the miraculous stream, which flowed from the rock beneath the rod of Moses. But in Israel every memory was a hope and symbol of that which was to come. The work of Messiah was described in the prophets under the figure of floods of living water, fertilising the thirsty ground. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," had said the prophet Isaiah.‡ The prophet Joel had foretold that a fountain should "come forth out of the house of the Lord."§ Ezekiel had used similar images.‖ Jesus was, then, certain of being understood by the people when He said, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."¶ He likened Himself to the rock in the desert which had given life to Israel. But the spiritual reality far surpasses the type; Jesus

* John vii. 33, 34.

† The last day of the feast of Tabernacles was properly the seventh, but the eighth was also kept as the conclusion of the solemnities. The people left their leafy tents and repaired to the Temple. The ceremony of bringing the water from the spring of Siloam did not take place on this day; but it was present to all minds, and nothing could be more natural than an allusion to it. At the time of the conclusion of the feast, Jesus addresses to the crowd gathered in the Temple an urgent appeal, founded on one of the ceremonies of the previous days. Nothing is more conceivable.

‡ Isaiah xii. 3. § Joel iii. 18.

‖ Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ¶ John vii., 37, 38.

not only quenches thirst, He opens in the soul a "well of water springing up into everlasting life,"—a magnificent image of the expansive force of the divine life, freely given that it may be freely diffused.*

The more clearly Jesus reveals Himself as Messiah in the exalted sense in which He uses the word, the more His hearers are divided about Him. Everything points to a decisive crisis at hand; the people are by turns attracted and repelled. One part is almost ready to believe in Him, or at least to take Him for the prophet who was to go before Messiah;† but the favourable impression passes away at the ready suggestion, by an adversary, of His origin in the despised province of Galilee. This is the favourite argument of the Sanhedrim. The council was still sitting, and awaiting with impatience the return of those whom they had sent to take this troublesome agitator, who moved the crowd in another sense. What was their indignation when the officers returned alone, saying, in self-defence, "Never man spake like this man." Thus, on the first encounter with Jesus, material force flinched, as if by an instinct of its future defeat. This haughty religious aristocracy gives the measure of its insolent pride in the significant words: "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" In vain Nicodemus lifts a timid voice to invoke that first law of universal justice, according to which the accused cannot be condemned without a hearing; his mouth is shut by the contemptuous rejoinder: "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."‡ Thus does passion

* The evangelist rightly refers the full realisation of this promise to the gift of the Divine Spirit (John vii. 39). It is clear how much the fourth Gospel takes account of the Old Testament, and how broadly it is distinguished in this respect from the Gnostic movement of the second century, from which it is said to have sprung. Perpetual allusion is made to the great facts of the history of Israel in the discourses recorded by St. John.

† John vii. 40–42.

‡ In their anger the members of the Sanhedrim spoke with a disregard of fact when they said no prophet came out of Galilee, for this was the country of Jonah.

stifle all remonstrance. The fate of Jesus is already decided. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles may, then, be considered as a great epoch in His life.

Shortly afterwards, perhaps the day following,* we see some of the members of the Sanhedrim themselves coming on the scene.† It is not enough for them to set spies upon Jesus; they will make a direct attack upon Him. They find Him in the court of the women, which adjoined their council hall, and was called also the Treasury, because in it were placed the coffers of brass destined for receiving alms. It was the custom to light, during the Feast of Tabernacles, two great candelabra, which shed light over the whole city; this ceremony was performed before all the people to the sound of instruments of music. Perhaps it was intended to recall to mind the bright cloud which was the torch of Israel during the nights of the desert. The candelabra must have been extinguished at the time Jesus entered the court, for the feast was at an end; but He was doubtless alluding to the ceremony when He exclaimed, "I am the light of the world."‡ It may be affirmed of these great statements concerning Himself that they are everything or nothing; if He is not truly what He says, no words can be more idle, for He gives no demonstration of His assertion; but if He is indeed the light, He needs but to show Himself. The simple manifestation of Himself will then be the most conclusive arguments. A fool or an impostor may make the same claims, but then he is after all only a madman or a rogue, while Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ. Unquestionably, another than He may say, "I am the light of the world," but He only "gives light to the world."

He meets the objections of the members of the Sanhedrim, who, according to their judicial notions, demand witnesses to

* We have said elsewhere why we question the authenticity of the narrative of the woman taken in adultery, while fully admitting the reality of the fact.

† John viii. 13. ‡ John viii. 23

verify His assertions, by a transcendent method peculiarly His own. The law of Deuteronomy requires two witnesses in every cause.* Jesus sets forth Himself and His Father as the two witnesses demanded. Jesus may be heard as to Himself, because He alone knows whence He comes, and whither He goes; such a mystery eludes every human eye; He is not alone, He is with Him who sent Him, and His judgment of men rests on that of His Father; while His adversaries, instead of elevating their judgment to this divine point of view, judge only by the appearance.† By this witness of His Father Jesus does not intend merely His miracles, but also that inner voice, that sense of the divine, to which He constantly appeals. He touches the very root of the incredulity of His opponents in that grand utterance: "I am from above, ye are from beneath; ye are of this world, I am not of this world."‡ This radical incongruity of nature is the reason why they cannot comprehend Him, and why they will put Him to death, and themselves die in their sins.§ His hearers stupidly imagine that He has formed some purpose of suicide; He then explains His true meaning: His death will be His elevation, for it will prove to His enemies, by the very punishment which it will draw down upon them, that He is indeed sent of God, and has done nothing of Himself.‖ Pressed by His opponents, He declares, in the same breath His deepest humiliation and His supreme dignity: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

Once again a revulsion is produced in His favour, not, indeed, among the Pharisees, but among the surrounding throng; some Jews seem convinced by His words, but He will have no doubtful or wavering adherents. Fugitive impressions are of little worth, and He declares that those only are His disciples who continue in His word.¶ Then saith He,

* Deut. xvii. 6. † John viii. 14–18.
‡ Ὑμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ, ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί (John viii. 23).
§ John viii. 21–24. ‖ John viii. 27, 28. ¶ John viii. 31.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* This is a direct insult to the haughty pride of the Jews, who glory in being of the seed of Abraham. The hearers indignantly remind Jesus of this their illustrious descent. He reduces their boast to its true worth, showing that at heart they are bowed beneath the yoke of the most degrading slavery—the slavery, not of Rome (which might by a strong effort be broken), but of sin. He maintains His position against their murmurs by setting forth their unworthy treatment of Himself; they call themselves the children of Abraham, and yet they seek to kill Him, the true Isaac, the holy revealer of truth.† He tells them plainly who is their father, even the great enemy of God, the murderer of souls: are they not partakers in his hatred of truth? is not the true cause of their repugnance to Jesus His divine holiness? "Which of you," He asks, "convinceth me of sin?"‡ Those who reject in Him the highest manifestation of the divine cannot be of God;§ whence then are they but of Satan? The exasperated Pharisees affect to regard Him as one possessed; but He repels their scorn, and asserts His true prerogative; though He seeks not His own glory, yet He is none the less the Prince of Life dispensing eternal benefits. He who believeth in Him shall never die. "Thou art mad," they say; "for even Abraham himself is dead." Jesus accepts the imputation, and goes on to affirm His pre-existence in terms yet more unequivocal. "Before Abraham was, I am." The Jews, who that day took up stones to stone Him, were truer interpreters of His sacred word than the commentators, who despoil it of all its transcendent significance; they had truly grasped its meaning, and if they raised the cry of blasphemy it was because this was no vain and empty saying. It is better for the supernatural to

* Ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς (John viii. 32).
† John viii. 34–42.
‡ Τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας (John viii. 46)
§ Ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ (John viii. 47).

be admitted, even with a curse, than to be cast out with show of reverence.

No reconciliation was now possible between Judaism and Jesus. The smallest occasion might bring events to a crisis. Such an occasion arose in a new miracle, wrought on the Sabbath day. Jesus loved to use His holy liberty, and to mark the broad distinction between the traditions of men and the law of God. Near the Temple, He met a man blind from his birth: He healed him, not directly by a word, but bidding him go to the pool of Siloam, and wash his eyes, which He had covered with a little moistened clay.* Ancient prophecy had made this famous spring a symbol of divine grace;† its softly flowing waters were tenderly contrasted with the rushing torrent—the image of the noisy power of pagan nations. This Hebrew typology, from which Jesus had borrowed so many allusions at the Feast of Tabernacles, was certainly not absent from His thoughts when He sent the blind man to the fountain of Siloam. No sooner had he returned, seeing, to his house, than the rumour of the miracle spread abroad through all the city. The Sanhedrim, who were on the watch for every proceeding of Jesus, were aroused immediately. An enquiry commenced, conducted under the influence of the most iniquitous passions. Such a miracle, augmenting the credit of a dangerous adversary, could not be admitted, and investigations were set on foot. The Sanhedrim summon to their bar the blind man who had been healed, hoping to extort from him a denial of the miracle; they obtain only a confirmation of it. Then the parents are cited to be confronted with their son; they will do nothing more than declare that this *is* their son, who was blind, and can now see; but so much are they under the dominion of fear that they refuse to give any other information. The subject of the miracle is examined again. The judges play the most contemptible part: they endeavour to constrain him to lie against his conscience. To all their

* John ix. 6. † Isaiah viii. 6.

solicitations the poor man replies, with unshaken firmness, that "one thing he knows, that whereas he was blind, now he sees." Let them say what they will, they cannot persuade him that what is, is not. The judges tremble with anger; since the fact cannot be denied, they will blacken it. They think to stop the mouth of this inconvenient witness, by telling him that Jesus is a violator of the law, and a sinner. But they have left out of their reckoning the great voice of conscience, which rises above all their craft and violence. "We know," says the healed man, "that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a servant of God, and do His will, him He heareth." No antagonism is so formidable to sophists, making a traffic of truth and religion, as the holy simplicity of an upright heart. The blind man foils the false calculations of his questioners; these return to the charge by asking him to tell them once again that which they already know. He darts at them this shaft of cutting irony: "I have told you already, and ye did not hear; wherefore will ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?"

Frustrated in all their schemes, the Sanhedrim close the inquiry with a summary act of authority, which was itself a confession of weakness; for to strike a blow instead of giving an answer is, in a spiritual court, an admission of defeat. The sentence of lesser excommunication, which lasted thirty days,* was pronounced against this bold heretic who had baffled both arguments and threats. It is clear that Jesus took the blow as aimed at Himself; it was for His sake the poor man was condemned, and this sentence secured him that sublime compensation reserved for the outcasts from every synagogue. He receives the approval of the Master, who reveals Himself to him as the Son of God, and at the feet of Messiah, the banished one esteems his shame to be his glory. Jesus immediately draws a great lesson from the late occurrence. "I am come," He says, "a light into the world, that they who

* This is the punishment intended in John ix. 34.

see not might see, and that they who see might be made blind."* The humility which seeks light receives it, and the pride which thinks it see, remains in darkness.

Before leaving Jerusalem Jesus pronounces His excommunication on the unfaithful hierarchy, but it is the excommunication of divine love, which does not seek its own revenge in the perdition of souls. What infinite pity dwells in this indignation of the Saviour! That which grieves Him most is not the offence which He Himself has received; it is the scattered flock, which instead of faithful shepherds has worthless hirelings, ready to flee the moment the wolf approaches, or the thief comes to steal and destroy.† They have not entered into the sheepfold by that door which the porter openeth; they have not received their commission from God, and have not accepted the grand condition of entrance into His kingdom, which is faith in Him whom He hath sent. In this sense Jesus is the door of the sheepfold. But He is also Himself the Good Shepherd; how great is the contrast between Him and the hireling! First of all, the soul which is His hears His voice, while it has no response for that of the impostor or the hypocrite; He feeds instead of neglecting His sheep; He defends instead of fleeing from them. Finally, He gives His life for them, the generous and sovereignly free gift of self-sacrificing love, constrained only by its own compassion.‡ It seems as though at the thought of His death, the horizon open to His gaze widens, for scarcely has He spoken of His sacrifice, when He sees the old enclosure of the fold thrown down, and those other sheep of all nations entering, who are to form part of His flock. "One flock under one shepherd," such is the future that He foresees.§

Such was the farewell which Jesus bade to the city which had rejected Him, before taking for the last time His journey into Galilee. His name was still tossed to and fro between insult

* John ix. 29.
† John x. 9–12.
‡ John x. 17, 18.
§ John x. 16.

and applause, but the approving voices grew fewer and fewer, and were chiefly heard among the lowest ranks of the people. His foes were not despicable men of Galilee; they were the great, the rich, the powerful. But He was not alone, for God was with Him.

CHAPTER III.

LAST SOJOURN IN GALILEE.* SOLEMN RETURN TO JERUSALEM THROUH SAMARIA. FEAST OF THE DEDICATION. (FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER, 782.)

I. Last Sojourn in Galilee.

JESUS will once more visit Galilee before quitting it for ever; He had left it abruptly, so as to arrive at Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, and He desires to take yet one solemn farewell of this people of His love and care. He finds the country just as He had left it; the multitude, variable as the wind, is ready to flock around Him one day if He works a miracle, and to fall away the next into the most unreasoning prejudice; the higher classes are averse or indifferent. Herod Antipas, who hitherto has looked with contempt on the new religious movement, or been aroused only to curiosity about it, now begins to treat it with declared hostility, perhaps intentionally exaggerated by those who are its organs. Jesus, who knows that He is to be put to death at Jerusalem, is in no way disquieted by the movements of Herod, whose character He epitomises in a word. This cunning and cruel fox will have no power to hinder the accomplishment of His mission.†

His activities are still divided between His disciples, whose education He carries on with unwearying patience, and the mass of the people, whom He endeavours to enlighten as to His mission. But His appeals now take a more direct form; He mingles severe reproaches with words of mercy; His very

* It is not possible to present the facts connected with this period in strict chronological order. We must be satisfied with grouping them.

† Luke xiii. 32.

love bids Him strike with importunate blows the proud hearts so hard to break. The position of both parties is now declared; overt war has begun, neutrality is no longer possible; His hearers must choose their side. In the early days of His ministry, He suffered the crowd to follow His footsteps without addressing to them such urgent personal appeals, because He was desirous first of all to make Himself known to them. Now they know enough of Him to choose between Him and His adversaries. Thus He does not hesitate to hold up before His present hearers the severe ideal of the true disciple. He demands an absolute self-surrender, which will not hesitate to break the tenderest and most sacred ties, and to subordinate the most legitimate family affections to the fulfilment of the divine will. This is what He intends by hating father and mother.* The best commentary on these declarations is the reply which He makes to the two men who are willing to follow Him, but on their own terms; the one desires to bid farewell to them which are at his house, the other to go and bury his father.† No; there can be no condition, no delay. When Jesus calls, every other consideration must be set aside; there can be no duty paramount to absolute obedience. It is then a perilous undertaking to become His disciple, and one that must be seriously contemplated; before starting on this warfare, the conduct of the king must be imitated, who measures his forces against the forces of his enemy; before beginning to build this tower, it is needful to count the cost, and see whether there be enough to finish it.‡ "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, cannot be my disciple."§ Assuredly such words were well calculated to alienate all who were not prepared to enrol under this banner of renunciation. And yet, if there was one lowly and willing heart, one sorrowful soul needing consolation, how could it resist such an appeal as this, "Come unto

* Luke xiv. 26. † Luke ix. 67–52. ‡ Luke xiv. 28–30.
§ "Οστις οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναταί μου εἶναι μαθητής (Luke xiv. 27.)

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

There is no more certain hindrance to coming to Jesus than the love of wealth. What a striking picture is that of the rich man falling asleep satisfied when he has filled his granaries with his plentiful harvests, and waking suddenly beyond the grave under the eye of that God who has not been in all his thoughts.† "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What advantageth it a man though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The parable of the king's feast belongs to the same class. Already the table is spread to receive the guests; the servants of the house bid them hasten to it, but they one after another make excuse. One has bought a piece of land, and must needs go and take possession. Another is proving a yoke of oxen. A third cannot leave his new-made wife. All these excuses reveal an idolatrous love for the things of this world. The master of the house is wrath at these temporisings, which are disguised refusals. He sends out his servants into the highways and hedges, and brings in the poor, the halt, and the blind. Thus were the natural guests of God shut out from His covenant. The rejection of the Jews as a people, and the calling of the Gentiles, appear in the background of this parable. The gate of heaven is narrow; there must be an earnest striving to enter in.‡ Let there be no reliance on forms and ceremonies; in vain shall be the cry, "Lord, Lord!" "I know you not who you are," will the King of heaven answer to the descendants of patriarchs and prophets. The door shall be shut upon them, while it shall be open to the multitudes coming from the east and the west. The first shall be last and the last first.§ Jesus constantly

* Matt. xi. 28–30. † Luke xii. 16–21. ‡ Luke xxiv. 24–30.
§ Ἰδοὺ, εἰσὶν ἔσχατοι, οἳ ἔσονται πρῶτοι καὶ εἰσὶ πρῶτοι οἳ ἔσονται ἔσχατοι (Luke xiii. 30).

points to this conclusion, because the sole possibility of salvation that remains to this generation is to cease from their obstinate rejection, and to profit by this dying beam of Messiah's day, before it is hidden from their eyes in night.

The same merciful severity is observable in the words which He uttered, on learning that some Galileans had been put to death by Pilate at Jerusalem, in the disturbances which had arisen there, on the occasion of the construction of a great aqueduct. "Think you," said He, "that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* These solemn words are like the last appeal to that favoured Galilee which had eaten and drunk in Messiah's presence, and had heard his most touching teachings. If the mood of the people is unyielding, we may judge what is that of the Pharisees. The old leaven of pride and hypocrisy is ever working in their hearts. The endless disputation on the manner of observing the Sabbath is renewed on every fresh occasion. Jesus is ever infringing the absurd decree implicitly issued against Him by the men of tradition: "It is not lawful to heal and to save on the Sabbath day." He continues to use His royal liberty in this respect, as shown by the healing of the poor woman bowed down by "a spirit of infirmity."† He chastises the pride of the Pharisee by drawing his likeness in ineffaceable colours; He shows him standing before God in the Temple, himself the object of his own adoration at the foot of the altar, lifting to heaven a prayer which in its pride is a challenge, and blessing the most High and Holy One that he is not like other men. Contrasted with him is the weeping publican, who, not daring to lift so much as his eyes to heaven, smites on his breast, and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This is the man who goes down to his house justified.‡ The parallel was a mortal outrage to the haughty enemies of Christ.

Thus from the highest ranks to the lowest, Jesus is met by

* Luke xiii. 3. † Luke xiii. 10–14. ‡ Luke xviii. 14.

opposition and unbelief. The kingdom of God has come without observation, and in spite of the miracles and teachings of Messiah, it has failed to arrest attention.* Men can mark in the blowing of the south wind the sign of a sunny day, but they cannot read the heavenly signs which announce that the new times are come.† On the eve of leaving for ever this land through which He has gone from place to place doing good, He pronounces its merited sentence. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."‡

Thus the ministry in Galilee, which opened with beatitudes, closed with a sound of woe. The names of Sodom and Gomorrah fell like a prophecy of evil upon those charming cities, which then animated the borders of the lake, and of which the very ruins have now disappeared. This terrible sentence of Christ woke the echoes, not of the desolate rocks which surround Jerusalem, but of those fresh and verdant hills on which the listening people once sat at His feet. It was the summing up of His Galilean ministry,—the conclusion of so many unavailing miracles, and rejected appeals. Thus the moral unity of the life of Jesus is maintained. Hearts have been revealed; He has never belied Himself. That which has changed is the disposition of the people, but He, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear, has never ceased to show to the world the love of God. At this very period, He urges with increasing emphasis the duty of the second great command-

* Luke xvii. 20–21. † Luke xii. 54–56. ‡ Luke x. 12–16.

ment. There is no approach to the fanaticism which leads to intolerance, closes the heart to tenderness, and, under pretext of entire devotion to the cause of God, shows no pity for human suffering.

Jesus seizes the opportunity of a feast in the house of a leading Pharisee to recommend, not only the humility which chooses the lowest place, but also the generous hospitality which bids to its board not kinsfolk and rich friends, but the poor and needy. Clearly what is thus given is only a special application of the rule which should govern the whole life, and ever substitute the free gift for the simple exchange of benefit or service.* The parable of the Good Samaritan belongs to the same date.† This draws, in all its breadth, the contrast between barren and selfish religiousness, and that Christian charity which for eighteen centuries has been bearing the burdens of humanity. The former passes proudly by the dying traveller in order to repair to the holy city, and offer to God, in His temple, a hypocritical worship; the latter sees God in His creature, and recognises no act of piety as more binding than to pour oil and wine into the sufferer's wounds, and to carry him to the hospitable inn. This was the sublime reply of Jesus to the scribe who asked Him—"Who is my neighbour?" "Thy neighbour is every suffering fellow man," is the general burden of the parable. But the Saviour goes yet further; He makes Himself one with the poor man; the sufferer is Himself. It is He who is visited in the prisoner's cell—He who is fed with the bread given to the hungry. The glass of water held to the thirsty lips He owns with gratitude, as if Himself had drunk it. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." But no less does He take to Himself the reproach and wrong endured by the least of His followers; no vain repetition of holy words will avail to avert the sentence of unloving hearts. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man supplements that of the Good

* Luke xiv. 7–14. † Luke x. 25–37.

Samaritan, by declaring the chastisement which will await those rich men clothed in purple and fine linen, who suffer the needy to perish with hunger at the door of their splendid dwellings. The veil which hides the future life is withdrawn for a moment, and we witness the terrible reversal, which awaits the great of this world, who have trampled under foot the humble and the weak; in the very hour when earth is honouring them with a costly funeral, they learn how widely the judgment of God differs from that of their flatterers, while angels carry Lazarus into the abode of glory.*

It is unjust to represent these parables and discourses as the excited expression of a sort of communism, as if Jesus had sought to found the religion of the poor. He laid no ban on riches in themselves, as is proved by the parable of the unfaithful steward, which concludes with a charge to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, thus implying that wealth may be made subservient to a noble end.†

The instructions given to the disciples during this period are in perfect harmony with the gravity of the circumstances; they are addressed, not to the apostles alone, but to all who had attached themselves to their little group. Jesus chose seventy from among them, whom He sent forth, as He had sent the twelve, to accomplish a mission, very elementary if only the simplicity of the message is regarded, but very glorious in the supernatural effects which accompany it. The seventy disciples, like those who have gone before them, are to learn in the school of experience, what is the demand Jesus makes on His witnesses, and what the extraordinary aid He grants to them.‡

The striking resemblance which exists between the two great commissions of the Gospel witnesses, deprives the first of any sacerdotal character. The apostolic office, in its moral obligation, extends to all the true followers of Christ, since the Master gave the same commission indiscriminately to His

* Luke xvi. 19-31. † Luke xvi. 9-12. ‡ Luke x. 1-11.

messengers, whether they were of the number of the twelve or not. The number seventy, as is well known, represented, in Jewish symbolism, the Gentile nations, as the number twelve was associated with the tribes of Israel. This second charge implies, then, an extension of the evangelical mission; we have no repetition of the restrictions by which the first was limited to the Jewish people. St. Paul, who represented in so many respects this second apostolate, wider than that of the twelve, should subsequently find an argument in favour of the world-wide character of Christianity in this choice of the seventy disciples, as we may gather from the careful record of the event by his friend and companion Luke.

The seventy disciples appear to have made a rapid journey; they returned much elated at the great power with which they had found themselves entrusted; even the devils were subject to them.* They needed to be cautioned against pride, for the human soul easily lets itself become intoxicated, even with the gifts of God, and is ever ready to confound the feeble instrument of the miracle with the sovereign hand which works by it. Hence the warning words of Jesus addressed to them: "Rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."† It is not the prodigy wrought, but the pardon received, which should fill the heart with joy unutterable.

Every saying of the Master is a watch-word for the great battle. His exhortations may be thus summed up: "Gird up your loins," as travellers gather up their flowing garments. Lay aside every earthly care, in reliance upon Him who clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds the fowls of the air. The exceptional character of the first apostolic mission implies an absolute surrender of earthly goods—"Sell that ye have, and give alms." Let your heart and your treasure be on high. Have your lamps lighted, for the solemn vigil is about to begin; you must be on the watch, like servants whose master is absent,

* Luke x. 17. † Luke x. 20.

but may return at any moment. Woe to that servant who, knowing his master's will, shall not be ready to receive him. This return of the Messiah, which will be the close of history, is depicted in a few rapid and terrible strokes, piercing like lightning-flashes the vast obscure. Jesus gives a kind of solemn summary of the Divine judgments which will precede the final judgment.* The same thoughts will soon be further developed in the great prophetic discourse spoken at Jerusalem.

This holy vigil, this solemn hour of expectation, must be spent in prayer; for whence shall come the strength for such perilous duties? Imitate, then, the widow whose importunity compels the unjust judge to see her righted. If persevering urgency triumphs over unrighteousness itself, what will it not obtain from the God of mercies, when it knocks at those heavenly gates which are ever ready to open?† If the father, who is in bed with his children, rises to give bread to his importunate friend, what will not He give who, ever watching over His people, slumbers not nor sleeps?‡ The disciples, conscious of their insufficiency for the great task entrusted to them, exclaim: "Lord, increase our faith." "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," Jesus replies, "ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you."§ Faith, in truth, is power; and he who believes absolutely shares in the divine omnipotence.

But in all times, however critical, the ruling spirit of the believing heart is to be love, the love which can forgive a brother, not seven times, but seventy times seven, that is, without limit or end.‖ Jesus joins example to precept. As He passes through Samaria, James and John, in the impetuosity of their hearts, ask the Master that fire may be called down from heaven to destroy a village of the Samaritans which has refused to receive Him. Jesus rebukes them sternly.¶ Thus, whether

* Luke xii. 33, 34. † Luke xviii. 1-8. ‡ Luke xi. 5.
§ Matt. xvii 20. ‖ Matt. xviii. 22. ¶ Luke ix. 51-56.

He is addressing the people, or instructing His disciples, love occupies the first place in His teaching.

The evangelists have preserved many sayings of Jesus which belong to this phase of His life, and which give us an insight into His heart. On the return of the seventy disciples, He exclaims, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."* What doubt, then, can there be of His triumph, since His power is transmitted to His ambassadors? They have cast out devils in His name, they are thus invested with His might; He may die and return to heaven, in them He lives again, and the kingdom of evil is already vanquished. Jesus rejoices with a sublime joy in seeing these ignorant men, whom He has made His disciples, thus beginning to discern the truth which He had brought to the world, while it still eluded the great men and the wise. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me by my Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, neither knoweth any man who the Father is but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."† This emotion of happiness is so strong, that He will fain make His disciples sharers in it. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see; for I say unto you, many prophets and kings have desired to see these things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear these things that ye hear, and have not heard them."‡ Never has Jesus a more full and joyful faith in His work than at this moment when He knows that no further immediate success is awaiting Him. His soul soars calmly above all present difficulties. This confidence, unshaken in the midst of so many discouragements, reveals a much higher greatness than enthusiasm in a cause which is at once crowned with success. It is not coloured by any illusive expectations;

* Luke x. 18. † Matt. xi. 25-27.
‡ Luke x. 23, 24.

so far from shrinking from that which is before Him, Jesus anticipates it with holy eagerness. "I come to send fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."* This coming baptism is not to be like that which He received in the waves of Jordan, beneath the heavens opened to bless Him. This mysterious baptism is a bleeding sacrifice; and now that the appointed hour is at hand, He desires it with an earnest desire, for it is the consummation of His work, and the condition of victory.

Thus, in these plains of Samaria, which border on Judæa, as before on the summit of the Mount of Transfiguration, His heart is divided between the prospect of glory and that of sacrifice. Those quick thrills of joy, those eager impulses to reach the cross, all the changing emotions which betray themselves, show how far was the real Christ from an imaginary, impassive, abstract being. His was indeed a living soul, sensitive and responsive, but ever rising above circumstances, deriving from them neither its majestic calm nor its ardent love, but simply revealing through them all that inherent grace, which could neither be given nor taken away.

It is evident, from the Gospels, that this last journey through Galilee was accomplished with a certain publicity, and in the midst of a great concourse of people. Thus the Master seems to have gone over once more the whole field of His early mission.

II. Return to Jerusalem by Samaria. Feast of the Dedication.

In Samaria, in spite of the daring hostility to which we have alluded, Jesus gained at least one new disciple. Of the lepers whom He healed on the confines of Judæa, one was a Samaritan; and he alone evinced a true gratitude by coming to join himself to the followers of Christ as soon as he had fulfilled the

* Luke xii. 49, 50.

rites appointed by the law.* Winter had begun; it was the middle of December, the time for celebrating the Feast of the Dedication, in memory of the purification of the Temple by Judas Maccabæus.† These heroic recollections excited the patriotism of the Jews beyond bounds. It was a perilous step for Jesus to reappear in the holy city at such a moment. He repaired to the Porch, which was called Solomon's, because tradition assigned to it a date as old as the first temple. His presence at once caused a strong agitation. He recognised among those who gathered around Him, many of His opponents at the Feast of Tabernacles—so at least it may be inferred from the allusion He makes to the previous discourse.‡ After so many divine manifestations, the Jews yet dare to ask Him if He is truly Messiah; to such hardened hearts He will deign no further assurance. He confines Himself to one emphatic affirmation, appealing to His miracles. If they will not admit these, they set themselves against evidence, and are not of the number of the sheep who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. He will bring forward no other argument; everything comes back to this; this is the root of the matter.

He contrasts with these obstinate unbelievers, who will lend no ear to the voice within, the teachable spirits which have entered into His fold and to whom He gives eternal life. "My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."§ At this assertion of His Godhead they take up stones to stone Him. "For what good work do ye stone me?" Jesus asks. "For a good work we stone thee not, but

* Luke xvii. 11–19.

† The feast took place about the 20th of December (Josephus "Ant." XII. 7. 6.

‡ John x. 24-40.

§ Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν (John x. 30). The question is not here that of the moral harmony between Jesus and God, for the point here is not about the holiness, but about the power necessary to guard the sheep. This necessarily carries us into the region of the metaphysical.

for blasphemy," reply the Jews. It is erroneous to regard the words which follow as a modification of His former avowal. Jesus contents Himself with bringing forward the testimony of Holy Scripture itself, which, in its boldness of speech, even calls those gods who executed justice among the chosen people;* He does not liken Himself to these imperfect representatives of deity; for He—the sent of the Father—has declared Himself to be infinitely higher than they. He retracts nothing from what He has said; He merely presents an argument *a fortiori*.

The conclusion of the discourse is altogether in harmony with its commencement. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him."† The unbelief of the Jews, carried to its height, availed only to call forth the highest manifestations of the divinity of Messiah. But the time for words was over already the synagogue showed itself prepared to have recourse to force, and Jesus must needs hide Himself in haste from the fury of His enemies.‡ Murder is the last argument of the power of evil; but this will only serve to prepare new triumphs for the power of good. Love is stronger than death and hate.

* The quotation is taken from Psalm lxxxii. 6.
† John x. 58. ‡ John x. 39.

CHAPTER IV.

SOJOURN IN PERÆA. THE FAMILY OF BETHANY. RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.

I. Sojourn in Peræa.

PERÆA comprehended the country stretching along the eastern shore of the Jordan, from the foot of Hauran to to the borders of the desert, on the south of the Dead Sea. The waters of the river spread over it a marvellous fertility; the summits of Gilead and Moab stood out against the eternal azure; the climate was celebrated for its salubrity. Peræa, inhabited by a mixed population, was sufficiently distant from Jerusalem to be a stranger to the religious passions raging around the Temple; it offered to Jesus the quiet retreat which He could no longer find in Galilee. Such as He had appeared to the dwellers at Capernaum and in the plain of Gennesaret, at the commencement of His ministry, such He now showed Himself to the people of this country—as merciful, as helpful, as attractive, healing the sick, binding up the broken-hearted. But even in these quiet spots the spirit of disputation came to trouble Him. There was a division among the rabbis upon the question of divorce. The text of Deuteronomy ran that a man might be parted from his wife, if "she found no favour in his eyes, or if he found some uncleanness in her."* The school of Shamai took these words in the strict sense, and permitted divorce only in case of adultery. Hillel, on the contrary, gave them a dangerous latitude of interpretation, and admitted all kinds of motives for breaking the conjugal tie. This question was submitted to Jesus. In His reply He goes

* Deut. xxiv. 1-4.

back to the original idea of marriage, as it appears in the story of creation, thus elevating the primeval law above the law of Moses, which, on this point, had made a concession to the hardness of the human heart. According to this law of creation, marriage implies an indestructible union, for it creates a oneness of existence between the man and woman. This idea of oneness is lost so soon as the marriage bond is made precarious. Divorce is then forbidden, except in case of adultery, when the union is already morally destroyed; but the guiltless husband is alone permitted to contract a new marriage.* The rule laid down by Jesus is the best safeguard for the human family, for it is equally removed from a culpable latitudinarianism which puts marriage at the mercy of caprice, and from the extreme rigour which would maintain it even when it has been profaned and morally violated—a sure method of introducing a corruption of manners.

Further than this, He declares marriage itself to be subordinate, like the whole of the human life, to the accomplishment of a higher will. Celibacy is no dishonour, as it was esteemed by Jewish prejudice; it may be a heavenly vocation.†

The duty of absolute renunciation comes out with terrible clearness in the words addressed by the Master to the young man, rich in great possessions on these fruitful plains of the Jordan, who came to Him. He had every virtue; he was a faithful observer of the law; perhaps a ruler of the synagogue. Sincerely pious, he was attracted to Jesus by a strong impulse of sympathy. These dispositions were manifest from his first words, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" "Why callest thou me good?" was the reply; "none is good save God."‡ It is not that Jesus disclaims perfect holiness, but that while He is passing through the struggle and ordeal of human life, good has not in Him the absolute character it has in God; His purity is spotless, but it

* Matt. xix. 3-9. † Matt. xix. 12.

‡ Τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ Θεός (Luke xviii. 19).

is maintained so only by a free choice. This is the natural consequence of His humiliation, and of His real acceptance of the conditions of man's existence.*

To this exemplary Jew, Jesus recalls the well-known conditions of the righteousness of the law, which are summed up in the observance of the Ten Commandments. "All these have I kept," the young man replies. But the keeping of the law consists not only in observing such and such appointments, but in a readiness to fulfil the whole will of God, whatever that will may be; that is, in having made obedience the ruling principle of the whole life. To this, the young nobleman has not attained, for when Jesus, who has read his heart and discerned its master passion, says to him, "Sell thy goods and distribute to the poor," he goes away very sorrowful; he has not truly given himself to God, but still prefers his riches. His conduct calls forth the hard saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."†

There is no foundation for supposing that Jesus, under the influence of growing excitement, sought at this time to make impossible claims on His disciples, requiring of them celibacy and voluntary poverty. He made no such demand; the injunction He laid upon the young man was in principle that which He lays upon all who are called by His name; what He required of him is what He requires of each one of us, namely, the sacrifice of self and the surrender of the favourite idol. This is the universal law of the kingdom; it may vary in its

* This is, in our view, the only way of explaining this text. We cannot admit that Jesus places himself at the point of view of His querist, for the affirmation is direct and precise. Matthew seems to have felt the difficulty, for he thus renders the commencement of the interview—"Master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" *τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω, ἵνα σχῶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον* (Matt. xix. 16). Jesus said to him "Why askest thou me what is good?" (xix. 17). The question is then, not whether the attribute of goodness belongs to Jesus, but in what it consists?

† Luke xviii. 25

applications, according to individual cases; here it may be fulfilled in celibacy; there in the bosom of the family, under the burden of domestic cares and sorrows; now it may, as in the case of Zacchæus, leave the rich man his riches while it makes him poor in spirit; again it may require the wealth itself to be made a sacrifice, as in the present instance. Special vocations differ, but the essential vocation is one, under all diversities; the holiness which implies entire consecration to God is the universal law; there are no Gospel precepts for creating a sort of spiritual aristocracy in the church, while tolerating a level of mediocrity. Jesus founded no society of latter-day saints; what He founded was a church not devoted to wild chimeras, but realising in every day life the sublime folly of holiness unto the Lord. There are circumstances in which the abnegation of self is only possible in connection with the complete denuding of the outer life, but in this form the sacrifice is of no higher order than the lowly renunciation which finds its unobtrusive expression in the "daily round, the common task;" that which is of price in the sight of God is the spirit of surrender pervading all the life.

The ideal of the true disciple rises ever higher and higher before the eyes of the apostles. "Who then can be saved?" they exclaim. "With man it is impossible," replies the Master, "but not with God, for with God all things are possible." Hardly yet reassured, they ask, by the mouth of Peter, what they shall receive in exchange for the sacrifice they have made for Jesus. The compensation, he declares, will infinitely surpass the sacrifice; they shall receive ten-fold for every good thing they have forsaken for His name—houses, fields, brothers, sisters, wife, father, mother. They will understand in time what is the nature of this compensation; they will learn that the best recompence of love is more love, for it enriches itself by all that it surrenders, and its sufferings become its highest joys. As the last term of this tenfold felicity,* persecution is

* Μετὰ διωγμῶν (Mark x. 30).

promised to the apostles. We are reminded of the words of the beatitude, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." The twelve thrones promised to the apostles must be crosses first; but all reproaches endured for Christ will be turned into glory, and the unbelieving nation which has rejected Him and those who are His, will read its condemnation in the triumph of the long-persecuted Church. This promise of the twelve thrones, wrongly understood by the mother of James and John, leads her to prefer a most unseemly request. She asks the highest place for her two sons. "Ye know not what ye ask," says the Master. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" "We can," reply the sons of Salome. "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal, shall ye be baptized." In other words, he that will reign with Christ, must also suffer with Him. The kingdom of God is not governed like the kingdoms of the earth, by kings and great men. "Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant—for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."* Assuredly there was no equivocal sound in such words as these.

These grave discourses were interrupted by the most touching scene. The hearts of mothers were yearning for an assurance that this matchless kindness embraced their little ones. Some women of Peræa, moved by an irresistible impulse, brought their young children to the new prophet. They felt instinctively that between Jesus and these tender and pure lives, there would be a natural affinity. "The disciples rebuked those that brought them;" but the Master uttered the gentle words which have ever since thrilled the hearts of mothers: "Suffer the little children to come unto me." He took them up in His arms and blessed them, and exalted childhood as the faithful type of the humility which alone opens the gate of

* Mark x. 41-43.

heaven.* What a picture is here! The highest effort of art cannot reproduce its exquisite beauty. Behold the truly celestial idyl of charity!

II. The Resurrection of Lazarus.

Jesus was recalled to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem by sorrowful tidings, brought to Him, of a beloved family whose hospitality He had often shared. The village of Bethany is situated at a little distance from the Holy City, to the east of the Mount of Olives. Its white houses are still to be seen in the midst of the olive and carob trees which form its leafy shade; it is surrounded by hills which shut it out from the world; it is an abode of peace and quiet, and as such, all the more attractive from the nearness of the noisy city. Here the eye no more sweeps the wide luminous horizon, which spread before it from the neighbouring height, whence its glance could rest now on the solemn precincts of the Temple, now on the scorched plains of the Dead Sea. There is nothing to recall either the glories or the terrors of the theocracy. Bethany is a retired spot, fit to become the sanctuary of a divine mysticism. But it was not only as a calm seclusion for prayer that Jesus sought it, as He did the desert hills of Galilee; He had found at Bethany hearts that could respond to His own. There dwelt one of those Israelites indeed who became His disciples as soon as they heard His words. Lazarus lived with his two sisters, Martha and Mary, both equally attached to Jesus according to their peculiar dispositions; Martha's was a prompt and energetic nature, finding its natural expression in active service; Mary's, a deep and contemplative spirit. It would seem that Mary had anticipated even John himself in that close relation which fitly unites the true disciple to Jesus, for she received from the Master a word of unreserved commendation on that day, when she sat adoringly at His feet and heard His word. For her the first of all duties is to feed on his teachings; this unreserved affection in which

* Luke xviii. 15–17; Mark x. 13; Matt. xix. 13–15.

reverence is blended with ardour, this giving up of her whole being to Him who is at once her brother and her God,—this is the good part which shall never be taken away from her; in this lies her superiority to her busy and distracted sister, whose loyal heart nevertheless owns the influence of the divine guest. Luke in a few words makes us comprehend what comfort the Master must have found in this house, which he so often honoured with His presence.* After the barren disputations of Jerusalem, He went to rest under the fig-trees of Bethany, well knowing that there He was loved not for His miracles or His gifts, but for Himself. If he may be called blessed who gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, what must have been the blessedness of those who welcomed Jesus to their hearth and ministered to Him, in the midst of irritation and outrage, the consolation of their reverent sympathy?

Sickness had entered this home where the bonds of affection were so strong and tender. Lazarus was laid upon a bed of suffering; his sickness increased, and Jesus was in Peræa; it must be a journey of many hours before He could reach Bethany. A messenger was despatched in haste by the two sisters. Instead of turning His steps at once to their relief, Jesus merely makes answer in the prophetic words, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby."† Evidently He speaks under the influence of a special revelation; the event which is about to take place is to have a sufficiently weighty effect on His own destiny, to be made known to Him beforehand. After two days He declares His purpose of returning into Judæa. But Judæa is the place of greatest peril to Him; it may be death to go. To these objections, urged by mistaken affection, He replies, that in fulfilling his vocation, a man walks ever in the light, beneath the sunshine of God; while he

* Luke x. 38-42. The narrative of Luke shows that the relations with the family of Bethany had been formed before the fact he relates.

† John xi. 4, 5.

who seeks to escape it walks in the night, and must needs stumble. The only true peril is in disobeying a holy call. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world; but if any man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."* "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; I go that I may awake him out of sleep."† By this tender and sublime image He represents that which the Scripture calls the king of terrors. When the disciples understand of what sleep He speaks, they hesitate no longer, and Thomas exclaims, "Let us also go that we may die with him."

The scenes which follow are described by the evangelist with so faithful and graphic a pencil, that they pass with living distinctness before our eyes. Lazarus is dead, and has lain four days already in his rocky sepulchre, according to Jewish custom. The friends of the family have come from Jerusalem, and are making great lamentations over the deceased, while Martha and Mary sit plunged in a mighty grief, with which mingles a secret pang of wounded affection, which they will not own even to themselves. Why was not Jesus there in those hours of woe? Is His all-powerfull succour withheld only from those He loves? Suddenly they hear that He is coming. Martha, with her natural impetuosity, rises and goes at once to meet Him. "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." These are her first words. Then her ardent soul passes in an instant from grief to hope. "But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Jesus will not grant a miracle to a simple impulse of natural affection; He requires faith in its loftiest exercise, and His first aim is to revive this in the wounded heart. Martha must understand that what she asks is less than is already prepared for the whole race of man. The special miracle of a partial and anticipated resurrection is a small

* John xi. 9, 10.

† Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν κεκοίμηται (John xi. 11.)

thing in comparison to the general resurrection, "Thy brother shall rise again," says Jesus. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," replies Martha. The triumph of Jesus over death does not wait that final hour of manifestation; it is declared already, "I am the resurrection and the life." He resumes, "Whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "To die in the fulness of light, in the calm glory of the life which is in Jesus, is no longer that which human language calls by the name of death."* Martha declares her faith in Christ with a stedfast assurance which places her testimony by that of Peter, whom in so many features she resembles. "I believe," she says, "that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." If the scene had ended here, Jesus would even then have ministered sure consolation to the bereaved family of Bethany—such consolation as comes now to Christian homes into which death has entered, and which avails not only to stay the stream of tears, but to fill the darkened chamber with a cloud of glory. Faith grasps the great miracle; the interval is longer between the promise and its ultimate fulfilment, but it is only a question of time. Wherever He has trod, who is the Resurrection and the Life, death has been vanquished.

Yet the bleeding heart yearns for a present relief. Martha, still in tears, goes to seek for Mary, who, in the characteristic intensity of her grief, had not found strength to follow her. Bidden by her sister, she too goes to meet Jesus, who is still on the outskirts of the village. The friends of the family rise and accompany her, thinking she is going to the grave to weep there. When Jesus saw the melancholy train, and heard the plaintive voice of Mary echoing Martha's words (for the same thought had been uppermost in both their hearts), "He groaned in spirit, and was troubled," and coming to the grave,

* Godet II., p. 334.

He wept.* Let those look on amazed, who speak lightly of death as a thing in the ordinary course of nature. "It is terrible," says Pascal, "that man dies, and knows that he must die." That a free and intellectual being made for eternal life dies, and, like the lower animals, mingles dust with dust; this is an unnatural thing. It is a confusion in the order of creation, and none more deeply groaned over it than the Son of man, who saw in it the fearful traces of sin. With His great pity for fallen humanity mingled a tender and intimate sympathy with the bitter suffering of separation. Standing by the grave of Lazarus, He bears on His heart the burden of all mourners. He knows what it is to see a beloved form brought down to the silence and stillness of the tomb. In this solemn moment all present appear in their true characters. The envious Jews are not disarmed by the tears of Jesus; they reproach Him with having withheld His miraculous power.† When the stone is rolled away from the sepulchre, Martha, recognising the tokens of mortal decay, yields to the impression of the moment, and expresses a doubt. Jesus confirms her faith by these words, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Lifting His eyes to heaven, He gives thanks to His Father, even before the miracle is performed, so sure is He that what He asks is according to His will. Had He not received a positive revelation, even before Lazarus was dead, of that which was to come to pass? Under such circumstances His prayer is rather a public act of homage paid to God before the people, than a prayer properly so called, since He knows that this resurrection is willed of God. "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always, but because of them that stand by I said it, that they may know that thou

* Ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (John xi. 35.)

† John xi. 37, 38. The Jews mention the healing of the blind because these miracles were wrought at Jerusalem, and they had witnessed them. This is no argument against previous instances of the raising of the dead.

hast sent me." Then stooping over the sepulchre He speaks to the dead in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" and he that was dead rises, a living man, still wrapped in the shroud, which is quickly laid aside. Such is this simple and pathetic drama, for which men have dared to substitute a low comedy.*

* The resurrection of Lazarus is one of the Gospel facts most called in question. The silence of the synoptics is first urged against it. Strauss, in his sarcastic pamphlet, "Die Halben und die Ganzen," lays especial stress on this objection. This silence is unquestionably a difficulty, but it can be understood, if our three first Gospels are regarded as not the writings of eye-witnesses, and as mainly intended to record the events in Galilee. Lange's explanation ("Leben Jesu," III. p 11, 132), which considers the silence of the synoptics as dictated by policy, for the safety of Lazarus, appears to us too ingenious. It would have been necessary to carry such precautions much further, and to have withheld all proper names. But if in the synoptics we have no account of the resurrection of Lazarus, we have allusions to the facts immediately connected with it. Thus Mark (xiv. 3-9), records the act by which Mary of Bethany expresses her hearty gratitude for the resurrection of her brother. Still further, all the Gospels agree in relating the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the implacable determination of the Sanhedrim to strike a decisive blow. Apart from the resurrection of Lazarus, neither this enthusiasm nor this outburst of hate is accounted for. There was nothing to suggest either, in the sojourn in Perœa Some great event must have transpired between the previous visit of Jesus to the holy city and His triumphal entry. John alone bridges over the gap. The very tone of the narrative has a ring of genuineness which at once strikes the unbiassed reader. The explanations given by those who dispute its veracity are, to us, so many confirmations of the truth. I shall not refer again to that of M. Renan, alluded to above; it has been doomed to ridicule. Baur, and after him, M. Réville, regard the account of the miracle as a symbolical illustration of the words, *I am the Resurrection and the Life.* But this is a gratuitous supposition, which does not explain the crisis which follows, and which is opposed to the character of the narrative. Strauss, faithful to his system, regards it not as a philosophical myth, but as the reflection of the legendary miracles of Elijah and Elisha. He makes the narrative of the fourth Gospel the result of the most artificial combination that can be conceived. This Gospel, according to him, has taken from St. Luke the Lazarus of the parable, and has fulfilled the desire of Dives by raising Lazarus from the dead (Luke xvii. 27). (See "Nouvelle Vie de Jésus," p. 470.) A marvellous theory! We find in this hypothesis the same confusion as in the popular legend. At

The resurrection of Lazarus produced an immense sensation, and none were more deeply stirred by it than the Sanhedrim. The chiefs of the hierarchy comprehended that such a miracle, wrought at the gates of Jerusalem, would necessarily occasion an irresistible movement in favour of Jesus, if this were not at once checked by peremptory measures; one step alone seemed adequate to the crisis—the condemnation of Jesus. The feast of the Passover was approaching; who could tell to what lengths the enthusiasm of a populace, ever eager for the marvellous, might go, when the rumour spread of such a miracle. The Sanhedrim met in the council chamber, which formed part of the Temple. The deliberation was, from the first, of that stormy and sinister character which precedes extreme measures in times of danger. The question of justice was at once set aside, or rather it was never brought forward; the discussion turned only on the public safety—a method which is sure to lead to violence and wrong. The growing influence of Jesus was set forth as endangering the first interests of the nation. A possible insurrection was spoken of, which would draw down terrible retribution from the Romans. "They will take away both our place and nation," said the pale lips of these priests and doctors, who guarded the sanctuary of the true God, as the silversmiths of Ephesus defended the temple of Diana, for the honour and profit it yielded them.* This argument, worthy of the Sadducees, ought to have stirred to indignation the patriotic party. But the Pharisees were more

Bethany the traveller is shown, opposite the house of Lazarus, that of the rich man. Thus overstrained criticism blends with vulgar fable. We will not discuss the theory of apparent death maintained by Schenkel. Martha's observation with reference to the state of the corpse conclusively sets this aside. Schleiermacher, in his remarks on the "Life of Jesus," seems to shrink from his own theory of the mere semblance of death. He distinguishes this resurrection from the others, ascribing it directly to the divine power invoked by Jesus ("Leben Jesu," p. 233.) Ewald admits the authenticity of the narrative, but reproduces it without comment (Vol. V. 405–407.)

* John xi. 48.

jealous of their authority than of the independence of their nation; they dreaded Jesus more than the Romans. Thus they withheld the protest which under other circumstances they would assuredly have made. The Sadducee Caiaphas ruled the decision. Valerius Gratus, before leaving Judæa, had raised him to the high priesthood, which had grown to be nothing more than a precarious magistracy subservient to the policy of Rome. Thus the sacred historian designates him with reason the high priest for that year.* Caiaphas was in reality the docile instrument of Annas, his father-in-law and predecessor, an artful politician sold to the foreigner, though holding all the prejudice of his caste. He proposed simply a summary judgment, without further discussion. "It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."† Through these iniquitous words the evangelist catches a flash of prophetic light; they seem to him, in the mouth of the high priest, one of those unconscious oracles which the divine Spirit has more than once wrung from godless lips. Did not Christ, in truth, die for His nation and for mankind? No thought had Caiaphas of such a new found meaning, and his crime remains in its blackness. No voice invoked the eternal law of justice; the condemnation of Jesus was decided, though not officially proclaimed, for the Sanhedrim could not carry out its own decree, since the Roman governor alone held the power of capital punishment.

* *Ἀρχιερεὺς ὢν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου* (John xi. 49.)
† John xi. 50.

BOOK FIFTH.

The Great Week.

THE CLOSE OF THE STRUGGLE. DEATH AND VICTORY.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE FOR THE FEAST. THE JOURNEY. JERICHO. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY. TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

I. Journey to Jericho.

IMMEDIATELY after the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus retired to Ephraim, a little town lying near Bethel, to the north-west of Jerusalem. There He awaited the caravans travelling, from all directions, towards the holy city for the celebration of the Passover. The time for caution was past; He recognised in the concurrence of events the sure indication of the will of His Father. The fanaticism which courts danger is not obedience, for it proceeds from an untempered zeal which does violence to events; it places the impulse of the heart above the divine order; it is the assertion of self. True wisdom awaits the clear manifestation of a higher will. The noblest heroism is that of the combatant, who stands motionless on the field of battle rather than fail in the charge he has received from his chief. Such was the heroism of Jesus, until His hour was come; we shall see the same principle of obedience manifested now in the holy boldness of His acts and words.

His first decisive step was to repair from Ephraim to

Jericho.* The distance between the two towns was small. Jericho was one of the most flourishing cities of Judæa, and stood on the great caravan road, in a plain of luxuriant fruitfulness, irrigated by the Jordan and by the famous watercourse miraculously healed by the prophet Elisha. A delicious freshness tempered the intensity of the tropical sky, which scorched the neighbouring steppes of the Dead Sea. Thus this district formed a delicious oasis, adorned with the most variegated and brilliant vegetation of this land of the sun. The mountains of Judæa, wrapt in sunset-glory, enclosed it to the west, while to the east the Jordan ran low beneath the tall reeds, and flowed on unseen to its last bed in the accursed lake. Jericho, standing as it were in the midst of a garden of palms and fruit trees of every description, was called the city of perfumes. In place of the miserable hovels which now disfigure the plain, it presented the appearance of a populous and wealthy city, and the pilgrims who came from the north found a welcome halting-place in the midst of such marvellous fruitfulness. The melancholy contrasts of human life were, however, to be met with there as elsewhere; the groans of poverty and sickness were heard in the midst of luxury and wealth. But what matters the outward condition? The man with hands full of gold has no less need of Jesus than the beggar; in the high places of the social scale no less than at its foot, there are secret wounds of the heart which need a divine healer. The rich publican was impelled to seek Jesus no less than the blind beggar; He showed Himself as full of grace to the one as to the other, only according to the heavenly mode and measure which reverses the earthly, beginning always with the poor. Compassionate love has its hierarchy, and its preferences are ever for the forsaken and the despised.

As Jesus entered the city, a multitude gathered around Him, and all eyes were fixed upon Him. Everywhere He was greeted with hatred or acclamation; indifference was impos-

* Luke xviii. 35–43; Mark x. 46–52.

sible. No doubt His disciples exulted in this triumphal train, and were in expectation of some great miracle. A blind beggar, named Bartimæus—well known to the inhabitants of Jericho, who had listened for years to his plaintive monotone—sat, as was the wont of such sufferers, by the gate of the city. What he had already heard of Jesus had led him to recognise Him as Messiah; his heart was drawn out to the Deliverer, who, in his melancholy condition, was his only hope. Doubtless he had heard of that blind man whom Jesus had healed at Jerusalem, and of the many others in Galilee, to whom he had restored sight. Thus, when it was told him that Jesus passed by, he breathed out all his ardent desire, all his simple faith, in the one importunate cry, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me!" The disciples tried to silence him; this ragged suppliant was an annoyance to them. They forgot that the voice of suffering was that which awoke the readiest echo in the heart of the Master; no sigh escaped Him; nothing in His eyes is more important or more honourable than to answer the cry of the imploring beggar. He stops, and at once places His miraculous power at the behest of the poor man. "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" He asks. "Lord, that I may receive my sight." "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee!" Wonderful dialogue, repeated from age to age, between the utter weakness which trusts, and the love which saves! Glorious arms of Christ, offered to whomsoever will consent to supplicate for that which he has no power to earn! The healed Bartimæus enters with Jesus into the city, amid the acclamations of the people, who to-day bless God, and in a few more days will curse Him whom God hath sent.*

Hardly had He passed the gate of the city, when the pro-

* Matthew mentions the healing of two blind men at Jericho (Matt. xx. 29–34). It has been supposed that a similar case of healing may have occurred on Christ's leaving the town at the other gate. But the repetition of the dialogue renders this unlikely. It seems to us evident that the same fact is referred to; the precision of Mark's narrative gives him the advantage.

cession was arrested again by a scene of a very different kind. Zacchæus was the chief of the publicans* of Jericho; this post must have been one of considerable importance in so prosperous a city. But the wealth it procured was more than balanced by the scorn which it drew down from the Jews. Zacchæus was branded by public opinion, in spite of such noble and scrupulous disinterestedness that, as he said to Jesus, he gave half of his goods to the poor, and if he had taken any thing from any man by false accusation, he restored him fourfold. He was not infatuated with his own virtues; perhaps the unjust ostracism, of which he was the victim preserved him from the pride, which was fatal to his countrymen. He desired earnestly to see the divine Master; he knew that Jesus did not repulse publicans, that one indeed was found among his immediate disciples. He dared not, however, in face of an ill-affected crowd, approach Jesus, but he was resolved at least to look on His face, and being little of stature he climbed into a sycamore tree, planted, as is common in the East, in the middle of the road. Jesus read the wish of the noble, fretted heart, and at once promised to honour the house of Zacchæus with a visit. He went, according to His own beautiful expression, bringing salvation with Him, for He had found a true son of Abraham. "The Son of Man," He said in one of those words so inimitably descriptive of His mission, "is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

The prospect of entering Jerusalem amidst the concourse of a great festival, once more aroused false hopes in the minds of the disciples; in spite of all that their Master had told them of the tragical issue of this journey, the welcome He had received at Jericho revived all their cherished illusions. The parable of the pounds was indeed of a nature to dissipate them once and for ever.† It was easy to recognise Jesus Himself in the man

* Ἀρχιτελώνης (Luke xix. 2.)

† "They (the disciples) thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke xix. 11).

of lofty birth, who, in order to take possession of the kingdom which has been entrusted to him, must needs repair to the sovereign of a far country, because his subjects have rejected him. Rejected by the Jews, Messiah will be in truth only invested with His royal dignity in the heavens, whence He will afterwards return.* Instead of looking for a speedy triumph at Jerusalem, there must be a long period of patient waiting during which each one is bound faithfully to administer the trust which he has received of God. The talent committed to the ten servants represents that divine life, of which every Christian is to make a wise use, and from which he is to derive all possible gain for the glory of his Master and the success of His cause. He will be judged according to the increase of the capital confided to him, and the slothful servant, who has "hid his lord's money in the earth,"—who has supposed, that is, that religion would take care of itself without any effort of the soul—will be brought to certain condemnation and his talent will be given to the disciple who has made the best use of his holy trust. "To every one that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not even that he hath shall be taken away from him."† Nothing is more just than the application of this law, which is a permanent law of the moral world. The heart perishes in inaction, and becomes incapable, not only of adding to, but even of retaining the best gifts. The parable closes with the sentence of condemnation pronounced on the ungrateful nation, which has rejected its king.‡ Now the little company may start for Jerusalem, for they know what awaits them there.

II. The Adoration of Mary of Bethany.

* Luke xix. 12. † Luke xix. 26.

‡ Luke xix. 27. This parable is clearly distinguished from that of the talents, in Matthew xxv. 14-30, which unfolds another thought, that of the degree of responsibility corresponding with the measure of the gifts. In the first Gospel, it is not one sum given alike to all the servants, but an unequal distribution of talents.

The direct road from Jericho to the holy city passes through Bethany. We may judge what were now the feelings of Lazarus and his sisters for Jesus; there would be ever present to their minds not only the miracle, but also the tender sympathy and tears of their divine friend. It would not be possible for Him to pass by the place without pausing at the dwelling of these faithful hearts; beside, the Sabbath was at hand, the last which He was to pass on earth before that one in Joseph's sepulchre; where could it be better kept than at Bethany, in preparation for those days of sorrow and anguish which were to follow it? The next day, which was the first day of the week, Simon, surnamed the Leper, who had probably been healed by Jesus,* made Him a feast at his house. Lazarus was seated beside Him, the living monument of His saving power. The women, in the East, do not sit at the same table as the men. Martha served, evincing, in the manner most natural to her, her lively gratitude. In the midst of the feast Mary entered. This quiet woman, who in the ordinary course of life would have shrunk from anything which might attract attention, brought an alabaster box of very precious ointment. She anointed the head

* John xii. 1–9; Mark xiv. 3–9; Matthew xxvi. 6–16. John fixes the date of Jesus' arrival at Bethany; it took place, according to him, six days before the passover (xii. 1). The passover began on the 14th of Nisan, the day on which the lamb was slain. We shall see presently that this day coincides with the Friday, conformably to John's narrative. Clearly, John does not include it in his calculation. It is needful, then, to go back six days from the 13th of Nisan, which brings us to Saturday 7th; but as the Sabbath commenced on the preceding evening, we may suppose that Jesus arrived precisely at the hour when rest became obligatory, that is, before sunset on the Friday. He thus violated no prescription of the law. The order of events is then as follows: on Friday He arrives at Bethany, Saturday is the rest of the Sabbath, on Sunday a feast is given by Simon the Leper. He cannot have started again for Jerusalem on the previous day, which was the Sabbath. Beside, the Jews, who from John's account repaired from Jerusalem to Bethany, could not have made the journey on that day, because the distance between the two places, which was fifteen stadia, was more than the lawful Sabbath day's journey.

of Jesus, then broke the vase over His feet, and wiped them with her hair; the impulse of her heart was as impetuous, as oblivious of the judgment of men, as that which had drawn the weeping sinner of Nain to the same feet. Gratitude and repentance burn with a kindred flame on the altar of deep and ardent hearts. It is, beside, of the very essence of adoration to ignore conventional limits; it breaks in a manner the common forms of human speech, like another alabaster vase, and finds its fittest expression in the groanings which cannot be uttered. Adoration pours out the soul before God in words and burning tears: it throws us on our knees, overwhelmed with his greatness, blinded with ineffable glory; it calls forth glad sacrifices and unmeasured gifts, and can find nothing precious enough to make an offering to Jesus. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, remains for ever its most beautiful and touching type. It is the glory of adoration that it is madness in the eyes of dry and selfish souls, which count the cost of an impulse of holy love, and carry into divine things their utilitarian prudence. "To what purpose is this waste?"* say some of the disciples, moved by the inspiration of Judas.† To no purpose, in truth, but to express that which is inexpressible. This objection, repeated in all ages of the Church, has not withheld the sacred muse from multiplying her hymns, which are neither law nor doctrine; the splendid spire of the cathedral, which serves no purpose of shelter, still springs aloft into the air, and the pencil of holy art ceases not to translate the soul's ideal and to lavish its useless marvels; in short, the Christian heart will never be restrained from pouring out its treasures before God, with no other purpose than its own unburdening. The vase of ointment is perpetually broken over the feet of Jesus, and "this waste" serves to show that direct utility, even in a religious point of view, is not the whole of piety; that, beside the doc-

* Εἰς τί ἡ ἀπώλεια αὕτη; (Matthew xxvi. 8).

† Ibid. This may be inferred from the narrative of Matthew, who speaks of the disciples while John speaks only of Judas.

trine which points out the right way, the correct faith which walks in it, and the practical activity which sows the good seed, there is in the soul a deep need of love for its own sake, which requires infinite expansion. The plea on behalf of the poor, urged against Mary, is a sophism. The case is one in which the words especially apply, "This should ye have done, and not have left the other undone." Assuredly He who made Himself one with the poor, and said that whatever was done to them was done to Himself, sufficiently guaranteed their interests. Piety cannot be limited to the form of almsgiving; it must needs ascend directly to God in Christ, or it will soon cease to recognise Him under the veil of poverty, and will fulfil nothing more than an act purely human. The poor have everything to gain from this adoration; it is when the precious spikenard has been poured forth that the hands open for their most generous succour. He who is miserly towards God will be miserly also to God's creatures; calculation is incompatible with love. "The poor ye have always with you," said Jesus, "but me ye have not always. Let her alone, against the day of my burying hath she kept this." In other words, side by side with the daily and permanent calls of charity, which must not be neglected, there are extraordinary occasions on which piety must be manifested in an exceptional manner, and follow freely its own impulse. Has not Jesus just foretold to His own His approaching death? This vase of sweet perfume is the funeral honour prepared for Him in anticipation, by the sister of Lazarus, on the eve of those crowning ignominies. This feature gives to the scene an unapproachable pathos, telling as it does of the debt which every Christian owes to Jesus. For this immeasurable debt of love it is that the whole church, like the house at Bethany, is constantly filled with the odour, which rises from the vase of adoration broken at his feet.*

* We have already shown, in speaking of the sinner of Nain, how widely the present scene differs from that recorded in Luke vii. 36–50. The narratives of Matthew and Mark harmonise perfectly with that of John. Strauss in vain tries to confound them all.

We have already pointed out the part which Judas plays on this occasion. He is the mouthpiece of those disciples who share, at least in some degree, his ungenerous sentiments. It is he who calculates the number of pence wasted; and if he speaks of the poor, it is but to cloak his avarice. "He kept the purse," says John, "and he was a thief."* Does the evangelist intend to speak of some positive larceny, or of the hidden disposition of this ignoble soul, consumed by the love of money? The bitterness which characterises the words of John has been observed. It affords no cause for astonishment; we know that there could be no common ground between the sinner who has sold his Lord and the well-beloved disciple. The former was no more capable of comprehending the latter, than of admiring the act of Mary. This antipathy was drawn from the Master Himself, for it was He who kindled by contact with His own heart, the pure and ardent devotion of love which appears in the sister of Lazarus, and fills the whole soul of John. The more the spirit which animates Jesus is manifested, the more the illusion vanishes which had attached Judas to Him. The evil has overcome the good in the soul of the disciple; the gloomy prophecies to which he has just listened as to the approaching crisis, the hatred of the rulers, the posture of the Sanhedrim, all show him that his carnal dream of an earthly triumph is at an end. He is ready to repudiate a lost cause, which he can no longer serve without danger, and which, beside, has become odious to him since he has learnt that it demands everything and gives nothing—none, at least of those material gifts which he covets; but in forsaking it, he will at least gratify in some way his greed of gain. Hence it is, that after the impressive scene at Bethany, his resolution is irrevocably taken. Probably the parleyings between him and the Sanhedrim commence the following day.

III.—Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

* John xii. 6.

Hardly was the feast concluded when a large company of Jews arrived at Bethany, who, having come up to Jerusalem to the festival, had heard the marvellous story of the resurrection of Lazarus. These men, unbiassed by the intrigues and passions of the heads of the hierarchy, brought to Jesus the same favourable dispositions, which had been so general at the commencement of His ministry, and renewed for one brief moment the period of public favour. Their zeal was so great that the hostile party betrayed serious uneasiness, and even spoke of putting Lazarus to death.* Jesus was not unprepared for the triumphal procession of the morrow, for the caravans of pilgrims which he left behind were close at hand, and one spark would suffice to kindle the hearts, already impressed by what they had seen at Jericho, into a flame of enthusiasm. Through all the periods of His life, Jesus needed only to go with the stream in order to be treated as a king. We know why He had so persistently declined these honours; but on the eve of His suffering, He did not hesitate to accept them, nay more, He even prepared for them by sending two of His disciples to bring Him the ass's colt, on which He was to ride.† The Orientals, for solemn occasions, prefer this quiet animal to the fiery horse. From early dawn, the crowd coming from Jericho, pressed into the little village, eager to see the house signalised by the miracle, the sepulchral cave, whence at one mighty word, the dead had come forth, and above all, Lazarus and Jesus Himself. The whole body of His disciples, among them many who were but disciples of a day, gathered around Him and mingled with the Jews from Jerusalem. Garments were spread as a royal saddle-cloth upon the ass which Jesus was to ride; boughs were cut down from the neighbouring trees, and long robes were stretched upon the ground as a carpet of honour, and with palms in their hands the enraptured multitude intoned one of the noblest hymns of the sacred psalter, that which was wont to be sung on great festival days, "Hosanna, blessed be the King that cometh in

* John xii. 9–11. † Luke xix. 30.

the name of the Lord."* For one moment the people were lifted out of themselves, and caught one of those inspirations of enthusiasm which give an intuition of truth. A breath from heaven passed over the crowd, and swayed it as the wind bows the waving corn; it was but the rapture of an hour, but that hour was sacred.

When some of the Pharisees murmured at the tumult, Jesus answered them, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would cry out." He thus signified his acquiescence in this royal progress, and proved that it was no accident of circumstance, but a part of His fixed plan. The moment was come for him to give an exalted affirmation of His dignity as Messiah, for the near approach of the great sacrifice set aside the possibility of any prolonged misconception; this King was so soon to be made a victim, that no earthly and political hopes could be built upon Him. But it was well for His disciples that this token of glory should so closely precede His humiliations, that they might be assured that He submitted to these only of his own good pleasure. He must leave them a pledge of the triumph which was in store; otherwise the world would deem that truth was finally devoted to disgrace and failure. So far from this, its destiny is a glorious victory; it is meet that one prophetic ray should glance upon the brow so soon to be crowned with thorns. The Day of Palms is bright with that glorious promise, which is the consolation of the witnesses of Christ in hours of darkness and apparent defeat.

The path which leads from Bethany to Jerusalem is for a time enclosed, as it were, by the wooded hills which surround it. Then it turns abruptly, and joins the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives at a spot where in our day the searcher seeks in vain for the ruins of Bethphage, "the village of fig-trees." The horizon at once opens before the eye; beyond the deep Valley of Jehoshaphat, through which flowed the Cedron,

* Luke xix. 38.

Mount Moriah rears its height. At the time of Jesus, it was crowned with the majesty of the Temple, and the white buildings of the holy city marked out the parallel lines of the hills on which it was built. Jerusalem in its entire proportions stood out against the blue heaven. Such was the scene of which Jesus suddenly came in view. Forgetting His own momentary glory, He beheld only the mighty misery of the rebellious people; He knew what lay beneath that fair exterior; the queenly city, overflowing at that very hour with streams of pilgrims, that Zion of the prophets, was an accursed city, which had not "known the day of her visitation." "Oh, if thou hadst known," Jesus exclaimed, with accents of unutterable sorrow, "if thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." He foresaw the terrible destruction which would chastise this obstinate unbelief; He saw the smoking ruins, and the Roman eagle swooping down upon a people scattered and spoiled. Of all these glories there should not remain one stone upon another that should not be thrown down, and Jesus wept over the nation which was about to crucify Him. Such was the vengeance of love, rejected and maligned. This agonizing pity forms part of the passion of Jesus; glory and suffering are with Him always inseparable, and in this triumphant king of Zion we behold the Man of Sorrows!

This memorable day closed as it had begun. Jesus wrought His last miracles in the Temple, healing divers sick and lame.* Upon this the clear voices of the children in the Temple rang their hosannas through its desecrated arches. It was insufferable to the priests and doctors to be thus braved in the very sanctuary which was their domain. Jesus answered their words of indignation by a touching quotation from the Old Testament, which showed what a price He put upon the homage of these artless, upright hearts: "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected

* Matt. xxi. 14.

praise?"* After this short appearance in Jerusalem, Jesus returned for the night to Bethany. On the morning of the following day, He repaired again to the Temple, in order to affix His seal to His public teaching. He no longer hoped to persuade the people, but He would, at least, set in full light their impious rejection of Him. Everything in His words and actions tended to this end. As He approached the town, absorbed in these sorrowful thoughts, he saw a fig-tree rich in leafage, but barren of fruit. How striking the image of that theocracy of solemn form, proudly displaying its ceremonials of worship, while the very heart of the nation was become dry as dead and sapless wood! The malediction with which the barren fig-tree was visited, was one of those parables in action, so frequently found in the old prophets. To speak of injustice towards a tree is to push the love of equity to a ridiculous extreme, and to forget that unintelligent nature was created for the good of man, and has fulfilled its highest destiny when it has served to express a moral truth; assuredly a great honour is put upon it, when, instead of simply nourishing the body, it is made to nourish the soul. For Israel, as for the fig-tree, the time of fruit-bearing was passed. Only with the free creature the barren season is not inevitable, and the barrenness is a judgment.†

* Matt. xxi. 14. It seems to us very difficult to suppose that Jesus a second time expelled the sellers from the Temple. This would have been to furnish a plausible pretext to His enemies for laying hands on Him, and with a semblance of right His controversy with the Jews bore on far more important points. Having begun by pointing out the most gross abuses, He ascended to the very principles of the moral decay of the people. The date given by John for this act appears to us more in harmony with historical analogy; the strict theopneustic system alone compels the admission of continual *duplicata* in the Gospel history.

† Mark xi. 12–14. Matt. xxi. 18–22. In this narrative, as in the parables, the general intention, and not the details, must be regarded. Beside, if even the season of fruit was past, as the second evangelist remarks, it would have been, nevertheless, possible for Jesus to find fruit on this tree, for the spring fig was often gathered in March. (Wiener, "Real Wœrterbuch").

The priests and great men of Jerusalem were to show hearts hardened as that of Pharaoh, before signs yet more convincing than those of Moses. They were about to give the most fearful evidence of this obduracy, in the mingled perfidy and desperation of their last conflict with Jesus.

CHAPTER II.

RELATIONS OF JESUS WITH THE AUTHORITIES OF HIS COUNTRY. THE NEW RELIGION AND THE STATE.

THE Sanhedrim, after the famous deliberation which ensued on the resurrection of Lazarus, had given a commandment that any one knowing where Jesus was might take Him.* The enthusiasm of the pilgrims, come up to the feast, enforced more cautious proceedings. The new comers were less easily led than the habitual population of Jerusalem. This explains how it was that violent measures were not carried out, as might have been expected. Jesus, when He appeared in the Temple, upborne, in a manner, on the popular tide, was not an enemy to be crushed at a single blow. It was needful to temporise, and have recourse to artifice. There are the clear indications of a set purpose in the questions proposed to Him on this and the following day. All religious parties united to lay snares for Him, and forgot their mutual enmities in hatred of a common foe. The Herodians, the Pharisees, the Sudducees, appear by turns on the scene, and endeavour to draw from Jesus some word which may compromise Him with the people, and serve as the ground of a plausible accusation.

The Sanhedrim commenced by a true master-stroke, which might succeed in one of two ways, either in rendering Jesus odious to His countrymen, or in placing Him in the light of a rebel against the Romans. The Pharisees, joined with the Herodians, asked Him with hypocritical circumlocution whether it was lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar or not. No question

* John xi. 57.

was more critical; a reply in the affirmative would run counter to every popular prejudice, a negative answer would place Jesus in the rank of rebels liable to death. This two-edged sword was handled with diabolic skill. But once more cunning was to be foiled; Jesus surmounts the difficulty by rising to the commanding height of eternal truth. He solves with a word the hard problem of the relation between the civil and religious powers, and while He eludes a perfidious snare, He lays down the infrangible boundary between the domain of conscience and that of the civil authority. Let us pause a moment over this great decision, so fraught with principles for the renovation of society, and so instinct with light on the conduct of Jesus in the terrible conflict, in which He was to triumph or succumb.

"Why tempt ye me?" He says to His questioners, "show me the tribute money. Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's."* This sublime saying stamps a perpetual reproach on that convenient though transcendent disdain of all mean affairs, which leads men to withdraw from the conflict of right and leave the world to itself, indifferent alike to the good and evil of the social sphere. There is no sanction for such conduct in the teaching of Jesus, as He expressed it in words and symbolic actions.

The tribute represented dependence on the State; to pay it was to recognise the legitimacy of the civil powers in itself. It was of vast moment that the religion of the Gospel should make this recognition, and thus admit one of the essential conditions of the normal development of humanity. Had it assumed an attitude of opposition and rebellion, it would have forfeited its permanency; instead of a new star shedding light on the whole modern world, we should have had but a passing meteor crossing a burning sky.

* Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ (Matt. xxii. 21.)

But it would be a grave error to suppose that Jesus gave His sanction not only to the State in itself, but also to all the forms of iniquity and tyranny which it may assume. A new State was gradually to be formed under the influence of the Gospel, and to replace the pagan state by hallowing the first rights of man. Of the State, as of the Sabbath, it had to be learned, that it was made for man, not man for it. Thus that tyrannous control which characterised the heathen city was to cease, and to give place to the modern State, which is—at least in its more and more widely accepted ideal—the protector of right and liberty. In this new order of things, that which was called Cæsar in the time of Christ is called law; to render to the law that which is the law's, often involves resisting with manly energy *de facto* rulers. In the modern world, the Christian, as a citizen, has manly duties which were almost unknown in a heathen state. If Jesus had sought to transform the latter by other means than moral influence, He would have been constrained to employ force in the service of religious truth. This would have been to venture the salvation of humanity on the most hazardous of all stakes; it would have further rendered impossible the very reform designed to be accomplished, one of the great intentions of which was to withdraw conscience from the thraldom of the civil power, and to enfranchise the individual from a crushing yoke. To attempt a religious reform by acts of violence is simply to add to that inextricable confusion of religion and the State, which constitutes the most fatal despotism. Thus it may be said that liberty was born into the world on the day when Jesus, having spoken the words, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," added, "and unto God the things which are God's."

There is then something in man which belongs not to the State, and which is beyond the grasp of any tyranny; there is a region in which God rules alone, and at the threshold of which the civil power is bound to stay its foot. It is not true that faith, like tribute money, is to be imposed by the sovereign,

be he who he may; it is a matter for the individual soul alone. The State has no right of inquisition into our relations with God; it can neither form nor break the sacred bond; so soon as it traspasses on this holy ground, it loses its claim to obedience, and the meanest slave is then bound to resist Cæsar, that he may render to God that which is God's alone. The Gospel does not elevate piety alone into this higher region of the life, but the whole moral being and all the springs and issues of conscience. Thus, at the voice of Christ rises, amidst the overthrow of all despotisms, the everlasting rock against which they shall dash themselves in pieces, and which shall be the holy bulwark of moral freedom. The theocratic and the pagan city will fall together. The time is past when the representative of the civil power was also the representative of God, and when creeds and ceremonies were imposed by decree like the ordinances of public safety. The sword for the State, persuasion for religion; force for the one, free utterance for the other; thus is laid down the first condition of religious liberty. The two spheres are distinct, but there is constant communication between them by means of influence. Thus the State is to be entirely transformed under the leavening action of the new principles. Its progress will be in exact proportion to its respect for conscience in all which concerns religion. The Christian State, by pre-eminence, is that which, most thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, intermeddles the least with directly religious interests. Long and severe lessons of experience were needed before these great truths, contained germinally in the maxim of Jesus, triumphed over the prejudices of the ancient world. But they have been, nevertheless, the true inspiration of all the noble battles of conscience and of truth. Martyrdom has ever been a sublime demonstration of the impotence of material force at issue with faith. The martyr's superiority to torture has vindicated the liberty of souls. "How," said Tertullian, "shall I not render to God that which is God's? I, who in so much as

I am a Christian, am His image; a medal stamped with His likeness."*

Assuredly he is a free man who feels himself made in the image of God, and belonging to God alone. His independence towards Cæsar assumes a religious character, and his rights are inviolable because they are founded upon his duties.

The crucifixion of Christ is the great martyrdom. We shall see Jesus sealing with His blood the rights of conscience, for He was made a victim because He would fulfil the will of God to the uttermost, in spite of the opposition of the representatives of the State. Jesus is the chief of rebels against impious laws. His cross is like the sacred landmark, standing between the realm of Cæsar and that of God. His attitude at the bar of the Sanhedrim, and before the proconsul's tribunal, is the noblest exposition of His reply to the Pharisees and the Herodians.

We have reserved for this chapter a few incidents belonging to different periods in the public life of Jesus, which are in perfect harmony with the principle He has just uttered in the very stronghold of the theocracy. The indignation so fervidly expressed by Him, when James and John desired to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who rejected Him, proves how entirely He repudiated the intervention of force and constraint in purely spiritual matters. Subsequently, when the impetuous son of Jonas drew a sword to smite the emissaries of the Sanhedrim, Jesus rebuked his zeal with the stern words, "Put again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels."† The use of the sword is not interdicted absolutely; St. Paul declares that the prince bears it as the safeguard of justice.‡ Jesus was speaking then

* "De fugâ in persecutione," c. XII. † Matt. xxvi, 52, 53.

‡ "He beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans xiii. 4.)

only of the domain of religion; truth, in its highest personification, in its purest form, repudiates everything which bears the semblance of compulsion, and should heaven itself take up arms in its behalf, it would even then be dishonoured and degraded by the intervention of force. Taking the sword, it descends in a manner from the sphere of its own eternity into that troubled, fluctuating region, in which right is with the mightiest, in which all depends on a changing fortune, and the issue of a cause is decided by the breaking of a sword. That which takes the sword perishes by the sword, or at least so it may and so it deserves to perish; there is no guarantee for its security. A divine cause cannot accept such chances and subject itself to such contingencies. Truth may be loaded with fetters, branded with insults, treated by men of power as the offscouring of the world; it retains unblemished its inherent nobleness, so long as, faithful to itself, it fights with no other weapons and uses no other means than those which alone are worthy of it—holiness and love. "I, when I am lifted up," said Jesus, speaking of His death, "will draw all men unto me." His only throne was "the accursed tree," and He was a victor because a victim.

If we go further back in the history of Jesus we see Him, at the time of His return from Syro-Phœnicia, paying the tribute of two *denarii* levied for the service of the Temple. It was on this occasion that the miracle of the *stater* took place. Peter having cast his net into the lake of Gennesaret, drew out a fish, in the mouth of which was found that little piece of money, required by the Jewish taxgatherers.* If it is asked why Jesus, instead of simply paying this tribute like that which was due to Cæsar, works a miracle for so small a sum, the answer is that this related to His heavenly and not to His

* Matt. xvii. 24–27. The miracle here consists in the preternatural knowledge of a fact entirely eluding observation. I do not know on what *a priori* ground it is to be classed among the myths, if it is authenticated as the other miracles.

earthly citizenship. Now He is king in this region, and cannot acknowledge in the Temple of God an authority higher than His own. This is the explicit declaration He makes to Peter, "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute, of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." Jesus, the Son of God, cannot be a tributary to the house of His Father. Therefore it is that, consenting to pay the temple dues in order to avoid a useless scandal, He accompanies the payment with a royal act which asserts His dignity. His conduct then is not contradictory to itself. On another occasion, He declined most emphatically any interference in temporal matters. Two brothers came to consult Him on a question of inheritance. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" was His reply.* On the same principle, when the Pharisees brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, asking Him if she was to be stoned according to the law or not, He placed the question at once in a purely religious aspect, and refused to act as a judge; He silenced the accusers of the unhappy woman with the words, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone at her."† It is not that He abrogates the express laws of His people; He knows well that in social order, justice must have its course, but He will not substitute Himself for the competent authorities. His order is the moral and religious, in which the official judges are often lower than the accused; to speak truth, there is in this domain but one judge, and that is God, of whose decisions conscience is the voice. It is to the bar of the divine tribunal that He calls the Pharisees, and from it they retire confounded and self-condemned, while the guilty woman receives a word of pardon, which is at the same time a seed of moral renovation. "Go and sin no more," says Jesus to her.‡

* Luke xii. 14. † John viii. 7.

‡ It is well known that the account of the woman taken in adultery is wanting in the oldest manuscripts of the fourth Gospel. It is also

This touching scene can only be understood on the principle of a marked line of severance, drawn between religion and the State. On any other supposition, the very foundations of social order would be shaken, for public justice would be disarmed by a mistaken application of mercy.

All these deeds and words of the Master then point to the entire separation of the two kingdoms, so clearly declared before Pilate in the decisive words, *My kingdom is not of this world.* Thus was the great emancipation of the human conscience inaugurated not by violence, but by gentleness and submission; and spiritual liberty—the mother of all other liberty—received in its very infancy the baptism of suffering.*

evident that it breaks the thread of the narrative between the two passages—John vii. 52, and viii. 12, which are closely connected. Verse 13, which tells us that Jesus is addressing Himself to the Pharisees is not reconcilable with verse 9, which says that the Pharisees had retired to their homes. If this touching story forms no part in the Gospel of John, it is yet no less authentic in substance. It is clear from the writings of Papias, that it formed part of the earliest traditions of the church.

* A learned writer, M. d'Eichtal, in his book entitled, "Les Evangiles." Paris, Hachette, 1863, has given an interpretation of the famous text, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's," which does not sufficiently maintain the distinction between the two powers, and inclines too much to the side of a Christianity rather social than individual. (See Preface, pp. 4, 5.)

CHAPTER III.

THE DAY OF CAPTIOUS QUESTIONS.

I. Dispute with the doctors at Jerusalem.

"THE intellect," says a great writer, "is the most perverse of all instruments when it is not under the control of conscience." We will go further and say that, when at issue with the conscience, it is the feeblest of all weapons. There is a full confirmation of this two-fold assertion in the closing interviews between the Jews in the Temple and Jesus Christ. His opponents display rare subtlety and the most practical dialectics; the intellectual instrument has been polished and sharpened with consummate skill, but it breaks nevertheless in its first contact with the word of Jesus. He never descends to the battle-ground on which they wish to engage Him; He removes scholastic questions into the searching light of humanity and religion; while His adversaries are skirmishing in the empty spaces of sophistry, He constantly grapples with moral realities, and strikes home to the heart. His skill has no analogy with the prudence which evades a difficulty. No, He fights with uncovered breast, openly and without subterfuge, meeting captious questionings now with the silence of offended dignity, now with bold interrogations which confound His would-be judges, now with parables fraught with terrible condemnation to His ensnarers, till at length the cup overflows in a burning stream of indignation. Yet, if He finds among the doctors who surround Him, a man not yet perverted by the spirit of caste, and asking questions with at least a measure of sincerity, He replies with benignity. Thus He receives the scribe who asks Him, which is the greatest commandment of

the law; He points him to the sublime epitome of the decalogue given in Deuteronomy, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."* But when a difficulty is proposed in bad faith, Jesus baffles the artifice, and leaves the hypocrite worsted; He will not suffer Himself to be interrogated by such. In vain the Pharisees press Him to tell them on what He founds His authority. He contents Himself with asking them what they think of the baptism of John, knowing well the perplexity into which He throws these dissemblers, who dare not offend the people by charging their favourite prophet with imposture, and are still less willing to recognise the mission of the Baptist, which would involve that of the Galilean. "We cannot tell," said they. "Neither do I tell you," replies Jesus, "by what authority I do these things."† But He will not, therefore, abstain from using this contested authority; if He does not deign to vindicate, He will yet assert and manifest it.

The parable of the two sons sent into the vineyard, the one of whom is obedient in words only, while the other, rebellious at first against his father's commandment, yet in the end fulfils his task, contrasts in language as forcible as it is brief, the repentance of the publicans and harlots, with the false religiousness of the chiefs of the nation. The voice of John the Baptist found an echo only among the former, and the sinners of yesterday press into the kingdom of God before the zealots of to-day.‡

The colouring is deeper in another word-painting given on the same day. The wicked husbandmen were not content with neglecting their work, though nothing was wanting to render

* Mark xii. 28–32; Luke x. 25. Luke supposes that this scribe was actuated by an envious spirit. There appears no such indication in the narrative of Mark, which rather leads to the conclusion that he had been favourably impressed by the previous answers of Jesus.

† Matt. xxi. 23-27; Luke xx. 1–8. ‡ Matt. xxi. 28-32.

their labour fruitful—neither tower nor overseer, neither wine-press nor hedge; they killed the messengers whom the Lord of the vineyard sent to them, and they were ready to sacrifice even his son, the heir of the inheritance. Already the murderous plan was whispered, and the shameless plot laid in secret. What result was to follow those words, spoken but a few days before in the hall of the Sanhedrim, where Caiaphas had demanded the death of Jesus? The parable closes with a declaration of the price Jerusalem would pay for this iniquitous sentence. Those who pronounced it were pronouncing in reality the doom of themselves and their nation, for the enclosure of the vine of Jehovah would be laid low, and the vineyard given to other husbandmen. Another temple would arise on the ruins of the sanctuary of Jerusalem, and its corner-stone would be the doctrine rejected by the Jews.*

The same thoughts are conveyed by the parable of the marriage, which has many points of analogy with that in Luke, of the feast given by the master of the house. The times of Messiah are clearly pointed out under the figure of the marriage of the king's son. The guests have not only refused the invitation, but they have slain the servants who bore it. This punishment is depicted in vivid imagery. Their city is to be burned and the murderers put to death. No one may sit at the royal table unless clothed in a wedding garment. The rash guest who has failed so to array himself is cast into outer darkness. The leading idea of this parable is again the merited condemnation of the ancient people of God. The significance of these sayings is comprehended by the hearers, and their rage stops little short of giving immediate realisation to the most tragical portion of the parable, by laying forcible hands on Jesus in the sanctuary.†

Recourse to violence in religious controversy is the certain signal of defeat. The Pharisees show by their impotent fury

* See Matt. xxi. 33-46; Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-19.
† Matt. xxi. 1-12.

that they are worsted. They have succeeded no better alone, than when leagued with the Herodians. The Sadducees, their allies for a day, now follow them in the field. What amazing reconciliations are wrought by a common hatred! The Pharisees allow their most cherished convictions to be outraged without a protest, when they see any hope that by such means Jesus may be entangled. They, the sworn defenders of the doctrine of the resurrection, open not their mouths, while the Sadducees turn this belief into open ridicule, asking, with scarcely dissembled irony, what would be in a future life the case of a woman, who, according to the law of the Levirate, should have married successively seven brothers. Jesus silences this gross objection, so worthy of the materialists by whom it is presented, by declaring the new conditions of the angelic life of heaven; but he goes further, He assails those abject doubts of our immortal destinies which lurk under all such absurd hypotheses, and scatters them with an unanswerable argument. "Have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead but of the living."*

Having quenched this fire of malignant queries, Jesus becomes in His turn the questioner. He asks of those present whose son, according to the prophets, Christ should be? "They say unto him, The Son of David," for no interpretation of the Old Testament oracles was more unanimously accepted than this. "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?" replies Jesus, quoting the psalm in which Messiah, represented under the image of a victorious king, is saluted with this divine title. "If David then call him Lord, how is he then his son?"† Clearly Messiah's descent from David is not set aside in these gospels, which imply it on every page. Jesus sought to show that this nobility, the most illustrious of all in the theocratic point of view, was insufficient for Him, and that He

* Matt. xxii. 32. † Matt. xxii. 41-46.

traced a yet higher descent.* We see then how in this saying, as in the parable of the murderous husbandmen, and in His public discourses, recorded by St. John, He affirms His incomparable dignity, and asserts Himself to be the Son of God with so much the more power and clearness, the more He is loaded with ignominy by the heads of the hierarchy. The question which raises the most violent storms is much rather that of His person than of His doctrine; it is He Himself who is the cause of offence, and not His teaching. Why should we marvel at this? Is He not the Truth, and is not the religion which He founds altogether one with Him?

These closing colloquies sufficiently reveal the wilful obtuseness of the priests and doctors. The time was come to lash their pride and hypocrisy before the eyes of the people whom they despised. The accused, raising Himself to His full height, becomes in His turn the accuser; like the hero of the Old Testament, He breaks like tow the interwoven bonds in which perverse sophists have sought to bind Him, and crushes His foes with words more terrible than thunderbolts, which strike sudden light into the dark crevices of their hearts, and tear in shreds the veil of their mendacious pretences. The gaze of the divine eye is not blinded by wrath; it pierces to the hidden principle and secret roots of Pharisaism. It is not alone the hypocrisy of Jerusalem which is denounced; in this marvellous picture, every line of which is drawn in ineffaceable colours, the Pharisaism of every age sees its own image. Wherever are found formal worship, false devotion, proud scorn of the small ones of the world, inordinate self-estimation,—wherever virtue is only a fiction, the holy imprecations of Christ resound with all their solemn severity. It is not offended holiness only which speaks, it is also love—the true charity which cannot

* There is here a striking proof of the antiquity of the first and third Gospels. The first chapters, which the sceptical would fain represent as later legendary addenda, are implied in this declaration of Jesus; they form then an integral part of the narrative of Matthew and Luke.

suffer that which kills the soul. The shepherd of the sheep feels burning indignation against the hireling who leaves the flock a prey to the wolf, or sells them for his own profit. Nothing is further from the comic vein of the satirist, who turns to ridicule the misery and folly of humanity. Ridicule is unknown to compassionate love, for the broad contrasts which are food for the scoffer, are in truth the token of vast calamities, marking the lamentable disproportion between what we are and what we might have been. Thus we shall find this terrible discourse closing with a tender lament!

From its very first words, the characteristic trait of Pharisaism is brought to the light in a way that cannot be forgotten; saying instead of doing, putting ritual and form in place of feeling, seeming instead of being—this is its essence. "They say but do not." They bind heavy burdens grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen of men.* In other words, they play a farce of piety to win applause. Who does not see the Pharisee as Jesus has described him, proudly mounting to his doctoral chair, training his flowing robe, to which he has added fringes of purple, to mark his dignity as the son of Abraham,† wearing on his brow those little boxes or phylacteries, within which were inscribed sacred texts, choosing the uppermost seat in the synagogue, and desiring to be called of all men by the venerable name of Rabbi? All these fair appearances are but a solemn lie. A lie is that proud claim to open the gate of heaven! Woe to those who enter not in themselves, and who hinder those who are entering in.‡ They have in their hands the key of knowledge, but they use it only to lock up the treasure.§ A lie lurks in their prayers and pretended charity.

* Λέγουσι γὰρ καὶ οὐ ποιοῦσι (Matt. xxiii. 3).

† Numbers xv. 38.

‡ See for this discourse the whole 23rd chapter of Matthew.

§ Luke xi, 52. We find in this chapter of Luke a large portion of the discourse given in Matt. xxiii. It is probable that Jesus

"Woe to those who devour widows' houses, and for pretence make long prayers." A lie is in their ardent proselytism, for they do not convert, but pervert, and seek not the good of souls but the honour of a sect! A lie is their morality, which sets at nought the word of God, by unworthy casuistry and hypocritical traditions! A lie is their devotion, which lays stress only on trifles, which pays scrupulously the tithe of mint and cummin, while it passes by the eternal laws of justice and the love of God. Is not this straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel? All is fair without, but dark within, like the whited sepulchre which covers dead men's bones and all uncleanness. A lie, finally, is their feigned reverence for the saints and prophets of the past. Those who to-day build their sepulchres, had they lived in their time would have slain them, as they will soon slay the new messenger whom God has sent. "Some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar."* Truly it was not possible to tear away with a more unspairing hand the mask of false devotion. At heart it hates God and those who are His with a hatred which does not stop short of murder. The Pharisee's long priestly vestment is stained with the blood of the righteous; his interminable prayers scarcely drown the death-cry which is lifted against importunate Truth.

delivered two discourses of the same nature, one under the characteristic circumstances mentioned by Luke, the other in the Temple. Matthew, according to his custom, has embraced in that which he gives, several passages which belonged to the previous discourse. The passage, Matt. xxiii. 4, is found again in Luke xi. 39, with precise details which mark its true date.

* Matt. xxiii. 33. There is a confusion here between Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada (2 Chron. xxiv. 20), and Zechariah, the prophet, the son of Barachiah, who was not put to death. All attempts to remove this slight inaccuracy have been abortive.

Pharisaism has never recovered from the wound it received that day in the Temple of Jerusalem; formalistic hypocrisy, ever since that memorable discourse, has walked the world under a tattered veil. All the judgments pronounced against Jesus in the synagogue fail to counterbalance that terrible sentence with which He branded it, and which He left with it as His last farewell. But this inflexible Judge is no less the merciful Saviour; once again He weeps over the unhappy city as He had wept on the day of His triumph; His grief takes tones yet more touching; the familiar image which He adopts expresses the liveliest and most pathetic tenderness. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"* Does it not seem as if Jesus already beheld the Roman eagle hovering high in air ready to swoop down upon the sacred city, to crush and destroy it in its cruel talons? "I say unto you," He adds, "ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The demonstration of love has not availed to bring you to believe in Me; the demonstration of punishment will soon lay upon you its constraint.

On this same day, two other scenes of a very different character, brought some consolation to the wounded and indignant heart of Jesus. As He was entering the Temple, some Hellenist Jews, who were perhaps only Greek proselytes,† sought to see Him; they addressed themselves to Philip of Bethsaida, who brought them to the Master. In these representatives of the nations afar off, Jesus beheld an earnest of the ultimate triumph of His work. "The hour is come," He exclaimed, "when the Son of man shall be glorified."‡ He saw the world opening to Him as the broad field for the Gospel seed; He saw the wide, whitening harvest of souls, but He

* Matt. xxiii. 37, 38. † John xii. 23. ‡ John xii., 28.

remembered what a price must be paid for so glorious an issue. Death alone is fruitful. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."* Now this corn of wheat, appointed to death that it may give birth to eternal life, is Himself. The sacrifice is the condition of the victory. Such words would be readily understood by these sons of Greece, who had probably assisted at the great mysteries of Eleusis, which represented the immortality of the soul under the image of the grain of wheat, buried in the earth to germinate. Only Jesus gives a wide extension to the significance of the figure. If a man must needs hate his own soul that he may save it, what will be the cost of the redemption of the world? The chill shiver of approaching death passes over Him; He tastes its bitterness, and passing from joy to sadness with that sensitiveness of impression, which bespeaks the full reality of His humanity, He closes the pæan of triumph with a cry of anguish. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? But for this cause came I to this hour."† This is the earnest of the soul-agony of Gethsemane. It is clear then that the fourth Gospel does not give us, any more than the synoptics, an impassive Christ; if, after recording the first sorrowful struggle, John does not speak of the subsequent agony in the garden, it is because there was nothing to add to the picture drawn by those who had gone before him. There can be nothing incredible in the repetition of a spiritual crisis, unless we treat human nature as an abstract quantity governed by the laws of inflexible logic: the victory of to-day does not avert the combat of to-morrow, and the triumph is only final when all is fulfilled and we have rendered up our breath. "Father," Jesus cries, "glorify thy name." Scarcely has He given utterance to this unreserved submission to the will of God, when a mysterious voice is heard. The people said that it thundered, but to Jesus it conveyed an answering assurance

* John xii. 24. † John xii. 27.

of holy approbation from the Father. "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Evidently these divine words were spoken only to the soul, and were audible to the spiritual sense alone; they did not strike on the outward ears, else the whole people would have caught them. An outward sign accompanied the inward token, but this was a providential coincidence.* All agitation passes at once from the heart of Jesus. This wicked world which is about to condemn Him, He sees already judged,† and its prince ignominously cast out, while the cross rises before His eyes as the symbol of victory, and the sacred magnet which shall draw all men to Him.‡

These bold assertions provoke the murmurs of the Jews; they venture again to ask who is this Son of man? Jesus' only reply is one more appeal to them to profit by the last hours of day yet granted to them. He—the brilliant sun sent to enlighten them—is about to set, and then will come the night.§ But the calls of the eleventh hour are no more heeded than those of the first, the people persevere in their unbelief; their present blindness is the chastisement of their obstinate refusal of the light, and, according to the terrible oracle of the prophet, "their heart is waxed gross, so that they cannot see with their eyes, nor convert, and be healed." The divine word spoken in their midst, remains as an accusing witness and a terrible judge. The commandment of Christ was life eternal; degenerate Judaism would not submit itself to it, therefore it chose death. Such, according to St. John, was the conclusion of the public ministry of Jesus.‖ Thus was justified the sorrowful saying, inscribed on the frontispiece of the fourth Gospel, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

* John xii. 28. There is here something more than that which the Jews call *Bathkol*, for this was not simply a natural phenomenon, to which those who witnessed it ascribed a divine significance. The heavenly voice was beyond doubt a real message to the heart of Jesus.

† John xii. 31. ‡ John xii. 32. § John xii. 35, 36.

‖ From verse 24 to verse 50, we have in the form of a direct discourse a simple summary of the teaching of Jesus.

The second consolatory incident of this day affords a touching proof of the individual character of true religion; for even among a people who in their national character have cut themselves off from the kingdom of God, he yet preserves a moral elect, usually hidden and invisible in the surrounding darkness, who do not share in the same condemnation. The Master was on the point of quitting for ever with His disciples the desecrated sanctuary. As He passed the treasury, where large chests were placed to receive alms, He saw the rich men casting in their gold with a loud ring that attracted attention; while behind them, timid and trembling, a poor woman cast in the two mites which were all her living.* It seems as if the last teachings of Jesus had embodied themselves in these two types of piety passing before Him. Nothing could be a stronger expression of the broad contrast He had established between true religion and false. On the one hand was Pharisaism doing its good works to be seen of men, and worshipping and serving only itself, under the show of the service of God; on the other hand, the religion of the heart, the religion of love, sweet and lowly charity. The humble offering of the widow is royal in the eyes of Jesus, because she has given of her penury—she has given herself. In the one case, all is pomp and vanity, in the other all is simplicity and truth. "Blessed are the poor in spirit:" unblessed the rich, who are rich in their own eyes. Thus the last public words of Jesus are a confirmation of the first of the beatitudes. The loving soul, which makes itself a willing sacrifice, is the true temple of God, the altar whence pure incense rises to heaven. Compared with this spiritual beauty, what are those sumptuous marble porticoes,† which draw forth admiring exclamations from the disciples as they pass beneath them? "As for these things which ye behold," replies the Master, "the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down;" while the holy deed of this poor widow shall endure

* Luke xxi. 1-5. † Luke xxi. 1-5.

to those eternal ages, when faith and hope themselves shall cease.

Taking this incident as a starting point, Jesus unrolls the scroll of the future before the dazzled eyes of His disciples, incapable as they are yet of reading aright its various portents. This solemn converse is held on the Mount of Olives, just as the last fires of day are glowing on the ramparts of Jerusalem.

II. The Great Prophetic Discourse. Parables enjoining Watchfulness.

We have already explained, in speaking of the plan of Jesus, the general intention of this great prophetical discourse, protesting against that false idealisation, which will not admit that the sanctions of eternal justice may be carried beyond the realm of the purely mental and spiritual. Such a theory ignores the fact that evil has not confined itself within these bounds, but has stalked abroad boldly in the external world, as if its triumph there were assured and final; it has laid hold of the springs of natural and social life. By what right and by what philosophy can good be proscribed from having its revenge and justification in the very sphere, where it has seemed to be stifled and overcome? Human history without a climax loses all its moral character, and becomes nothing but a strange and confused medley of incidents, a monstrous phantasmagoria passing across a shifting scene. It is idle to pretend that behind the curtain which falls over the melancholy spectacle, each individual receives due punishment or reward. Under such conditions, justice would never be vindicated in human affairs, and generations would succeed each other without learning any wisdom from the past, or expecting any issue from the future. God has not suffered it so to be. Every period of history had its own decisive event, and receives its own solemn sentence. These partial judgments foretell the great final judgment, which is to close that which may be called the terrestrial economy. They are no sudden surprises of fate, or to speak more correctly,

no *coups d'état* of Providence, making violent assaults on liberty. No, nothing can better assure us of the value God sets on human freedom, than to see the history of society and of nature itself so suspended on moral decisions, that heaven and earth may be moved to carry out the awards of divine justice. We know no spiritualism bolder than this so-called materialism.

The main idea of the prophetical discourse of Jesus is to make all these partial judgments of history lead on to the final and decisive judgment, which is to close this economy, but there is no marked line of distinction anywhere drawn between impending events and the issues of the last times. The destruction of the theocracy is confounded with those great final throes, out of which will come forth the new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness. Prophecy gives its broad survey without perspective; the destruction of the sanctuary by foreign armies, the precipitate flight of the disciples, the first persecutions of the Church, the appearance of false Christs—all this prophetic painting of the events which will accompany the destruction of Jerusalem is set in a wider picture, which is nothing less than that of the catastrophe of human history.* These wars, pestilences, and earthquakes, which are but the beginning of sorrows, this preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world, which is to be witness to all nations, are so many signs carrying us onward to the last times, no less than the conclusion of the discourse which represents the sun and moon veiled with sudden darkness, the stars falling from heaven, the Son of man appearing before the trembling tribes of earth, and the elect rising at the sound of the archangel's trumpet. This confusion of historic periods is open to two explanations. First, the final judgment really commenced with the destruction of the faithless theocracy; the first terrible manifestations of divine justice were not only the signs, but the prelude of the end. Next, Jesus subsequently avowed that the knowledge of times and seasons belonged not to Him. "Of the day and the hour

* Matthew xxiv. 15-31.

knoweth no man, but my Father only," for it needs absolute prescience to be able to determine the date of events, which may be retarded or hastened by an infinitude of acts which are free, inasmuch as they are the consequence of moral determinations. Now Jesus, in his humiliation, laid aside this prescience. He Himself warns us not to seek to know the succession of times and seasons in His prophetic discourses.* His disciples then could not give chronological exactness in their record: vagueness as to time was inevitable. We do not hesitate to admit that in their ardent expectation of the immediate return of Jesus, they applied to this return words which really bore reference only to the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus they connected with the last times, a saying of their master, which evidently had no such relation, and was applicable solely to the destruction of the temple and the holy city; we refer to the famous passage thus rendered, "I tell you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."†

The truth which comes forth from all these grand images is the certain announcement of Christ's return, and His triumph on this very earth which has rejected Him and which will share in the judgment by one last revolution of the Cosmos. It is not to inflame the imagination of His disciples that Jesus paints the future in such vivid colours, but to enforce His last charge to them on the eve of those mighty conflicts which were about to commence. "Watch therefore," He says, "that ye may discern the signs of the times, as the husbandman knows that summer is near when he sees the branch of the fig-tree tender and putting forth leaves."‡ Watch, that ye be not surprised and taken unawares, for judgment will smite the earth more rapidly than the lightning which cleaves the cloud, or than those waters of the flood which overwhelmed a heedless generation who

* Acts i. 7.

† Matt. xxiv. 34. All the explanations designed to lessen this difficulty avail only to shift, not to remove it. We find it in Luke xxi. 32.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 32.

were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." "There shall be two in the field; one shall be taken and the other left.* Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and the other left." The parable of the Ten Virgins presents, in an impressive form, this solemn charge to vigilance. Woe to the soul which has suffered the pure oil of faith and love to dry up within it! At the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh," the unwise virgin will have but a lamp "gone out," and the doors of the heavenly marriage feast will be shut against her.† The parable of the talents, which differs from that of the pounds, in that it gives the exact proportion of Christian responsibility to grace received, marks in outline the use that must be made of those short and precious hours which precede the awful midnight call. The prophetical discourse closes with a sublime representation of the supreme court of heaven, before the bar of which every one shall be judged by Him who "tries the reins and the heart." In vain does mocking scepticism jeer at this high decree; it cannot still the terrors of conscience. After all, the doctrine of rewards and punishments is inseparable from the very conception of justice.

Under what impressions of holy awe and ardent hope must the disciples have returned to Bethany that evening, when they left the green slope of Olivet, from which they had seen the scroll of the world's history unfolded beneath the awful light of divine justice.

The public ministry of Jesus is over; He will devote to His disciples the last few hours which remain before His sacrifice.

* Matt. xxiv. 37–41. † Matt. xxv. 1–14.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCENES IN THE UPPER CHAMBER.

I. The Preparation for the Passover. The Last Supper.

ALL things are now ready for the catastrophe. The Sanhedrim hold one last meeting before the Passover, not in their ordinary place of convocation in the Temple, but in the house of the high priest, Caiaphas, to consult on the best means of striking the final blow. These magistrates, high in station, set themselves to plot the death of the innocent, like brigands laying a dark train of violence; they are unanimous in the decision that it will be needful to use cunning to destroy Jesus; they are fully conscious that the deed they are about to commit is a crime, and they prepare for it without any of those false semblances of justice, to which deliberative assemblies generally have recourse in order to deceive themselves. Carried to such a height as this, hatred can no longer wear a mask; its vehemence makes it barefaced. The intrigues, already commenced with Judas, are resumed; only a final parley is required before proceeding to the arrest. The members of the Sanhedrim desire that all may be completed before the feast, so as to avoid a tumult of the people.

Thus passes the Wednesday.

On the Thursday evening, the eve of the Passover, Jesus sends to bid one of His disciples at Jerusalem to make ready his house for the celebration of the Paschal supper. Thither He then repairs, having decided to anticipate the solemn feast by one day. He who is Lord of the Sabbath has unquestion-

ably the right to choose His own hour. He knows that the Sanhedrim have decided to put Him to death before the feast. Is it not meet that this Passover—the last of true Judaism and the first of Christianity—should be celebrated on the very day, when the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world is slain? To observe a scrupulous conformity with national customs would be to sacrifice the spirit to the letter. There is a striking harmony with the whole tone of the ministry of Jesus in this free modification of Jewish ritual for a higher end.*

* We have already shown the discrepancy between the synoptics and St. John on this point. None of the proposed methods of harmonising the two narratives appear to us satisfactory. Let us mention the principal. First, we have mere hypotheses invented to meet the necessities of the case. There is no passage to warrant Strauss's supposition that there were notable differences of opinion among the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus as to the determination of the feast day; or, Ebrard's, that in consideration of the large number of lambs to be sacrificed, the Paschal supper was not celebrated by all the Jews on the same day; or Calvin's theory, that when the 15th of Nisan, the legal day for the feast, fell on a Friday, they deferred its observance till the following evening, as is done by the Jews of our day. Second, Olshausen maintains that the words φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα (John xviii. 28) should be taken in an extended sense, and that they may be applied to all the meals which accompanied the numerous sacrifices offered during the feast. These sacrifices were named *Passah*, as may be shown from Deut. xvi. 1–3. This explanation would be admissible, if the text upon which it bears were the only one which presented any difficulty, but it cannot be denied that the whole of the narrative is against it. Olshausen maintains further that the precautions taken by the Jews against defiling themselves on the day of preparation were only in view of the Sabbath of the morrow, and do not show that the Friday was the great day of the feast. This is to derogate too much from this great Jewish solemnity which, as we have already shown, was more scrupulously observed than any Sabbath. Third, M. Lutteroth borrows the whole argument by which he seeks to harmonise our Gospels from the word παρασκευή. ("Le jour de la préparation. Lettres sur la Chronologie pascale." Paris, 1858.) He places this day of preparation on the 10th of Nisan, the day when, according to the law, they set apart the Paschal lamb (Exod. xii. 3–6.) On his system Jesus passed the 11th, 12th, and 13th of Nisan in the tomb, and rose on the 14th. But this hypothesis passes by altogether Matt. xxvi. 16. *The first day of unleavened bread* could not by possibility be the 10th of Nisan. What

The little company meet in an upper chamber. This humble resort becomes the most glorious of sanctuaries, for nowhere in the world has the divine presence so made itself felt as within those common walls. There is to be sought the cradle of the Church; there the spiritual family appears gathered around its head, receiving from Him consolation and strength, and above all, those mysterious communications of His divine life, which are to the mystical body what the blood is in our veins. For the first time, Jesus belongs exclusively to His own, and reveals to them how deep and strong may be that holy intimacy between Him and them, which is heaven on earth, or rather which is heaven in the heart. He does not receive as at Bethany the hospitality of devoted friends; He is Himself the host, and in this last supper enacts the part of the master of the house. Thus, while in the town of Lazarus all the honours were done to Him, here it is He Himself who presides over the meal; the words He speaks are the deepest expression of His divine love. It is as though He, in His turn, broke the box of precious spikenard over His disciples. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." These words of John bring to mind the

becomes also of Mark xiv. 12: *When they killed the Passover;* and of Luke xxii. 7, *Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed!* We feel it absolutely impossible to take these last words as an anticipation of the resurrection. Fourth, M. Godet, taking his ground on the commencement of the Jewish day in the evening, supposes it was really on the evening of Thursday, 13th of Nisan, which was at the same time the beginning of the 14th, that the disciples said to Jesus, *Where wilt thou that we go and make ready the Passover?* The preparations were then made by them for the feast of the morrow, but were made use of by Jesus the same evening; and thus the accounts would be reconciled. It seems to us impossible to harmonise this explanation with Matt. xxvi. 20. *When the even was come.* The preparation for the feast had then been made earlier in the day, and consequently on the 13th of Nisan, and not at the commencement of the 14th, which was the day of unleavened bread. In fine, we regard the contradiction as hitherto insoluble, while we give our entire assent to the narrative of St. John.

glowing setting of the eastern sun, which reserves for the parting hour its most glorious beams, and enpurples the mountains of Judæa before it sinks in night.

Every circumstance tends to lend an incomparable pathos to this scene. We are on the eve of the crucifixion; afar off we hear the din of the city multitude, who to-morrow will raise the death-cry; the disciples are gathered around the Master. He sees them as sheep fallen among wolves, and the traitor is in their midst. In view of anguish and perils unutterable, the pitying love of Jesus flows forth in tender words.

The feast of the Passover, or of the Deliverance, was marked by that simple and sublime solemnity which characterised the Old Testament worship. The lamb slain for each Israelitish family, recalled the deliverance and exodus from the land of slavery on that awful night, when the firstborn of the Hebrews escaped the death-doom which fell upon the Egyptians. From the time of the prophet Isaiah, this meek and quiet victim had prefigured a deliverance of an infinitely higher order. The unleavened bread and bitter herbs symbolised the hasty flight of the chosen people and the hardships of the desert life. Each family assembled on the 14th of Nisan. The father, after a short prayer, passed round again and again a cup of wine mixed with water; every time it passed from hand to hand, a psalm of adoration was sung. During this ceremony the son of the house asked why the feast was kept, and then followed a short recital of the exodus from Egypt; then the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread. The feast concluded with the passing round of a fifth cup and with a hymn of praise. The father, at a certain moment, dipped a morsel of bread in the bitter herbs; it was in reference to this ceremony that the Passover was called also "the feast of unleavened bread."*

We find the main features of these solemn observances in the repast of the upper chamber. Hardly has Jesus entered

* Olshausen. "Comment. Biblique sur l'histoire de la Passion," p. 12.

with His disciples when He takes the cup, saying, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you that I will no more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* These words are the touching expression of a purely human feeling; it is a friend addressing his friends at the moment of parting from them. But the Son of God is none the less manifest, for at the very moment when He thus yields to the pathos of the farewell, He points to a glorious reunion with His disciples in the life eternal. Then, after the wonted prayer, He passes the cup.

All present stand at this opening of the feast; then comes the moment for them to recline. The disciples, even in this hour of holy sadness, dispute about the first place by their Master, with an eagerness which springs as much from rivalry as from ardent affection. Jesus brings to their memory that singular order of the hierarchy of His kingdom, which reverses the ranks of human life, and gives the highest place to the lowliest: the Christian is not to be ministered unto, but to minister like his Master. The more deeply to engrave this precept on their hearts, Jesus takes a towel and performs the meanest offices of hospitality, washing His disciples' feet.† He makes Himself in reality their servant. How could the disciples desire to reign and rule after such an example? This symbolic act gathers a new significance from the resistance of Peter, who, ever a man of sudden impulses and rapid action, would not consent to this condescension of his Master. He learns first that He must yield an unquestioning obedience, and then that the general purification of the soul obtained by pardon, does not dispense with the daily cleansing; for the pilgrim bound for heaven cannot pursue his journey without the dust of the way cleaving to his feet. "He who is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." But this teaching is only as it were a passing episode; the great lesson of this solemn hour is that the servants of a God who has humbled Himself,

* Luke xxiii. 15, 16. † John xiii. 4, 5.

should seek their glory in humilty and love, and that all pre-eminence should be transformed into a generous service to humanity.

The disciples, according to custom, have taken their places on couches around the table. John, in an impulse of sorrowful and anxious affection, leans on the bosom of Jesus. He cannot endure the thought of losing so soon his divine friend, and his still feeble faith only dimly discerns the future triumph through the darkness of the present. Then the Master's voice is heard, saying, "One of you shall betray me."* The disciples are filled with astonishment; on a sign from Peter, John asks which of them is capable of so black a crime. Jesus replies that the traitor is he whom He will point out by handing him, according to the order of the Paschal meal, the sop dipped in the bitter herbs. These words are exchanged in an undertone; none of those present, except Peter and John, know the terrible significance of the act about to be peformed. No doubt the reproachful and indignant glance of Jesus is understood by Judas. It is a last appeal—the decisive hour of his destiny is come; there is no middle way for him now between full repentance or a final fall. The unhappy man gives himself up to the devilish powers of which he is now only the tool. "What thou doest, do quickly," said Jesus to him, as He read in his cold resolution that the end was sealed. Judas quitted that sacred chamber to go and close his bargain with the Sanhedrim. "It was night," adds St. John, establishing a kind of parallel between that soul, in which the last spark of good had just been extinguished, and the darkness of the world without.

With the departure of the traitor a weight seems lifted from all hearts. Jesus speaks of the glory which awaits Him, which is also the glory of His Father. He points to His death by these words, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."† The moment is come for the institution of the great

* Matt. xxvi. 21. † John xiii. 33, 34.

sacrament of love. Still conforming to the customary usages of the feast, Jesus takes unleavened bread and distributes it, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me."* The second cup, blessed by the master of the house, becomes the solemn token of His blood shed for the world. "This cup," said He, "is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you."† The meaning of these words, which have aroused so much stormy controversy, is simple and clear. The bread and the wine of the first Eucharist could not by any possibility contain the very body and very blood of the Christ, seated at the table and Himself dispensing them. We are thus shut up to a symbolic meaning, but the symbol contains a living and spiritual reality. To ask and to take the solemn tokens of redemption, is to confess before the world and before the Church, faith in this great fact, and a resolve, like St. Paul's, "to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified;" it is to express a desire after a moral assimilation of His divine life, as positive as the physical assimilation, which transmutes the material bread into a part of our very substance; and as in the order of Christianity, to ask is to receive, the disciple who participates in this sacred feast, obtains a glorious confirmation of his faith in exchange for his feeble testimony, for Christ gives Himself to the penitent and believing soul. At the table of the Lord's supper, man and God meet together—man with his best aspirations, God with His richest gifts. The Eucharist is the most solemn and most intense expression of the need of salvation, and is, in consequence, the most real communication of the divine life. It concentrates and unites all the elements of piety, and may be called the sacrament of the Christian life. Yet more, it is also the mystical feast of the Church, blending all hearts in one common adoration. The sacred memorial of the free

* Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον (Luke xxii. 19.)

† Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον, ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον (Luke xxii. 20.)

pardon of God, it brings with it the spirit of pardon and of mercy. This holy table is the meeting-point between the mighty love which comes down from heaven, and the humble and fervent love which rises from earth. There is no need to seek in it any other mystery than the central mystery of the Gospel. It is to misrepresent the Lord's supper to make it not the memorial, but the renewal of a sacrifice which could only need to be repeated if it had been incomplete. Christ did not say, "I will make myself again and again a sacrifice upon the altar," but simply, "This do in remembrance of me." "Nor yet that he should offer himself often," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*

II.—Warnings and Consolations. The Sacerdotal Prayer.

The bread and the wine vividly typify the approaching sacrifice. This day of trouble will be doubtless a day of triumph for Jesus, but how can He forget the sadness and despondency of His weak disciples? They will be shaken by the tempest like corn in the sieve. Jesus foretells their defection. Peter protests with indignation, not having yet learned to distinguish between natural ardour and stedfast faith; he declares that he at least will continue faithful to his Master, and that though all others should be scattered, he will remain firm as a rock. Alas! in this very night, before the cock crow, he will have belied himself! Jesus predicts his denial positively, for He knows that presumption infallibly goes before a fall.†

The disciples have no adequate idea of the gravity of the impending crisis. To awaken them to a consciousness of it, Jesus uses the symbolical method peculiar to Him. He addresses them as soldiers about to enter on a campaign. "He that hath no sword," He says, "let him sell his garment and

* Hebrews ix. 25, 26.
† Matthew xxvi. 34; John xiii. 36–38.

buy one."* The apostles take literally the counsel which is only intended to be figurative, and show Jesus two swords. The petty number of combatants gathered round Him might suffice of itself to dispel such a carnal illusion. Jesus' meaning is simply this: "The hour of peril is come; prepare yourselves to meet it."

The last words of the Master fill the disciples with alarm; they feel that indescribable anguish which precedes heart-rending separations. And what a separation is that which is awaiting them! No more to see, no more to hear Jesus; to be abandoned to those terrible temptations, which He had just foretold; can there be any sorrow like theirs? Jesus seeks to present to them consolation equal to their need, and He puts it with that divine art which belongs only to perfect love.

"Let not your heart be troubled," He says, "ye believe in God, believe also in me."† Such is the commencement of this discourse, which is devoted to an enumeration of all His titles to their confidence. He opens first to them the most glorious perspective; He speaks of that home of the blessed, whither He is going to prepare a place for them. This is to be the sure goal of all their labours and sufferings. "I will come again," He says, "and receive you unto myself." The return of Christ is, in truth, the only efficient consolation for His departure. Where He is, they shall be also; this promise makes heaven to them a *home;* it wears no more to their minds an aspect of vague and terrible immensity. If Jesus is to be found again at the end of the way, He is also the very way itself which leads to God; nay more, he who hath seen Him hath already seen God. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."‡ But He gives them a yet more immediate consolation. Nothing so raises and rejoices the heart as a great mission, and the work which is appointed to them is one which knows no limit, for they are called to gather the fruits of their Master's labour; they shall do greater works than His,

* Luke xxii. 36. † John xiv. 1. ‡ John xv. 16.

though their works will still be His, as consequences belong to the producing principle. Strength adequate for this sublime mission shall be granted them. The Spirit of God Himself, the Paraclete, the Comforter, shall be their efficient helper, the light of their intellects, the fire of their hearts, the revealer to them of all truth. This Spirit will subdue the world, by means of that which seemed to the Prince of this world the assured pledge of his success. The cross will, in truth, prepare this crowning victory, for the world, in setting it up, will manifest its shameful unbelief in the Crucified. The glory which is to follow His suffering will be the divine vindication of His name. Finally, the accursed tree will become the pillory in which the powers of evil will be exposed, for they have judged themselves by nailing to it the Holy and Just One. Such is the meaning of those controverted words, "When the Comforter is come he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come: of sin, because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father; of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged."* If the operation of the divine Spirit is wonderful without the Church it is still more wonderful within it. Through Him, Jesus will dwell in His own. Thus will be realised that touching promise, the precious pledge of an unalterable peace, which the world can neither give nor take away, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you"† The beautiful similitude of the vine and the branches sets forth in all its intimacy and fruitfulness, the relation which unites the disciple to the Master.‡

No mere sentiment of enthusiastic and ecstatic affection will suffice—nothing but that holy love which finds expression in obedience. "Ye are are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."§ The first commandment of love is love. Doubtless such love as this will imperil ease and earthly happiness. "If they have persecuted me, they will also

* John xvi. 8—12. † John xiv. 18. ‡ John xv. 1—6.
§ John xv. 14.

persecute you, but all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."* Assuredly it is expedient, as He says, that the Master should go away, since He will certainly come again, no more clothed in feeble flesh, which confines His presence to one place, but invested with glory and power, so that He can bestow Himself undividedly upon each disciple. Then He will no more need to speak unto them in parables, for the full daylight will have succeeded to the dawn.† Well may He who has such promises and such consolations for His disciples, close this pathetic exhortation with words of triumph: "Behold, the hour is coming, and now is, when ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."‡

Thus, final victory in heaven at the end of the way, and in the present life a glorious mission with the all-powerful aid of the Holy Spirit, and the continual presence of Christ with His own; sufferings crowned with more abundant consolations and with the peaceable fruits of righteousness; glorious persecutions leading to more glorious triumphs; peace and joy abiding and unutterable;—such is the bequest which Christ makes to His disciples. These last discourses, so wonderfully adapted to their weakness and sadness, are broken often by their anxious questions, and so far from being, as they are represented, an elaboration of transcendental theology, they lend themselves naturally to all the incidents of a free colloquy.

* John xvi. 20–23. † John xvi. 23–28. ‡ νενίκηκα (John xvi. 33.)

When the last cup has gone round, and the hymn of thanksgiving has been sung, Jesus, leaving the upper chamber, turns His steps with His disciples to His favourite retreat at the foot of the Mount of Olives. But, before crossing the Cedron, He lifts His eyes to heaven, and utters more than words of consolation. He invokes His Father on behalf of His Church, in that prayer, justly called His sacerdotal prayer, in which, embracing at one glance all its perils, all its sorrows, and all its needs, from that hour to its final consummation, He places underneath it as it were, "the everlasting arms." To every believer in the invisible world, this prayer must seem the loftiest effort of the human spirit to rise to it. It seems like the steady soaring of the eagle into the eternal light. "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."* This glory which He asks is, in fine, the full realisation of His work of love; He returns to heaven to carry on there what He has begun in shame and humiliation upon earth. His desires centre on the few disciples who are around Him; they have believed in Him, they have attached themselves to Him. It is for them He prays at this hour, and not for the world, for they are His, given Him by His Father, and won at the cost of so much suffering. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. While I was with them in the world I kept them in my name; and now come I to thee. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."† Their loneliness, their temptations, their dangers are all re-

* John xvii. 1–5. † John xvii. 14.

membered. "I pray not that thou shouldest keep them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." How great is their need of sanctification! They are the sent of Christ, as Christ is the sent of God, and they are to carry on His work of redemption upon earth. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." The Priest of the new covenant thus offers to God, in His person, the whole of that new humanity which He represents in His sacrifice. It is not only for this handful of disciples that He prays, He sees in them the Church of every age exposed to the same conflicts and trials. He will bear her with Him into His glory, and introduce her, as it were, into the mysterious unity of the Godhead. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

Thus does this prayer of Christ first cover His disciples as with a shield in the day of battle, and then bear them up on mighty wings into the very presence of the eternal glory. The work of redeeming love is only then fulfilled, when, having stooped to the lowest depths to seek the lost, it rises again with the saved into the highest heavens, even into the inaccessible light in which dwelleth God.

* John xvii. 24–26.

CHAPTER V.

THE PASSION OF JESUS.

I. Gethsemane.*

ACROSS the Cedron, just at the foot of the Mount of Olives, was a garden named from the *oil press*. Under the heavy shade of its trees there was unbroken solitude; only the rush of the brook was to be heard; of Jerusalem nothing could be seen but the white sepulchres on the edge of the ravine, which overhung the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and the lofty porches of the Temple on Moriah. Here again and again Jesus had sought and found a sure retreat. Thither He goes once more with His apostles. He leaves them at the entrance of the garden, except His three most familiar disciples, Peter, James, and John.

There remain but a few hours now before His last humiliation and final sufferings. The Prince of Life is brought face to face with death—a shameful death, instigated by all the fury of devilish malice! His murderers are the children of that beloved Jerusalem which He has freely enriched with His benefits, and over which He has wept burning tears of compassion; it had been enough that they belonged to mankind to fill His soul with grief at such a crime. His death will be the most complete manifestation of evil, for in it sin will display its utmost power. We have already shown, in speaking of the resurrection of Lazarus, how abnormal a fact death was to the perfectly holy Being, who was also the supremely merciful and

* See Matt. xxvi. 36–46; Mark xiv. 32–42; Luke xxii. 39–46.

pitiful One. Thus, whether in His own person, or by a sympathy so close as to be a complete appropriation of our shame and griefs, Jesus is about to taste all the bitter consequences of the fall, concentrated in His agony; this is the cup which to-morrow He will drink, and the bitterness of which He tastes in anticipation in this solitary night. The sleeping of His disciples, who cannot watch one hour with Him, gives the presage of their flight, and of that utter loneliness which is awaiting Him. The will of God for Him at this decisive moment of His career is that terrible death, at once the full manifestation and the full punishment of the sin of mankind. He has accepted the will of His Father in all the various circumstances of a life in which has already mingled much of sorrow and reproach; by virtue of this obedience, He has never ceased a single day to carry on His work of redemption, but this moment brings Him face to face with surpassing grief and ignominy. He has, doubtless, already accepted all that awaits Him; but the prospect, more or less remote, of sacrifice is another thing from the sacrifice itself. Therefore it is that He who found His meat and drink in doing the will of His Father, must yet "learn obedience" in that garden of agony "with strong crying and tears."* Herein appears the reality of His humanity.

This night in Gethsemane is a veritable agony. Sweat, like great drops of blood, gathers on His brow; three times He falls on His face with the prayer that, if it is possible, this cup of bitterness may pass from Him. But it is not possible, and three times over He repeats that supreme expression of obedience, "Father, not my will, but thine be done."† These words, the echo of His broken but submissive heart, inaugurated the era of salvation for man, for in Christ they brought man back definitively into the paths of obedience.

At the close of this victorious conflict, an angel appeared by

* Hebrews v. 8.

† Μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου, ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γενέσθω (Luke xxii. 42.)

the side of Jesus, a messenger of peace and reconciliation; heaven and earth were united on this spot, watered by the tears and bloody sweat of the second Adam. The soul had overcome in the fulness of its freedom.

The silence of John as to the agony in Gethsemane furnishes no ground for surprise, when it is once admitted that his is not intended to be a complete narration. He, no less than the other evangelists, presents to us, as we have seen, a Christ, the sharer of our griefs and woes. To see irreconcilable contradiction between the majestic calmness of the last discourses in the upper chamber and the groans of Gethsemane, is to misconceive entirely the true character of humanity, ever susceptible to different impressions; it is to forget that the death of Christ has a double aspect, that it unites suffering and glory, shame and victory. Let us hold fast the blessed fact of the full humanity of the Son of God.

II. The arrest. First trial.

At the first dawning of the day—less brilliant than the heavenly light which flooded the soul of Jesus—a noisy troop crossed the threshold of the lonely garden. It was led by one who knew well the ways of the Master. Judas had promised to point Him out to the rude subalterns who knew Him not. His aid had become indispensable since it had been decided to use cunning rather than violence in striking the great blow, and to avoid all popular agitation. Jesus was to be surprised at a time and in a place in which He was sure not to be surrounded by a crowd, and for this end it was needful to know his habitual retreats. One of His familiar friends could alone supply such information. All was to be done as quietly as possible; the sign agreed upon for the arrest was the kiss of the traitor. "Judas," said Jesus, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" This poignant reproach awoke his conscience; he drew back affrighted before the quiet majesty of Him whom he had only consented to betray by stifling his scruples. The

rude men whom he led became suddenly conscious of the power of Jesus; terrified and confounded by His effulgent dignity they fell at His feet in spite of themselves. "Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?" said Jesus. "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched out no hands against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness."* As soon as they had recovered from their first terror, the emissaries of the Sanhedrim laid hold of Jesus. It was then the impetuous son of Jonas drew his sword, and wounded the servant of the high priest. Jesus wrought His last miraculous cure upon this man, and the rash zeal of Peter called forth for the Church that sublime declaration, which sets the might of invincible truth against the power of the sword and of force. "Put up thy sword into thy sheath; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."†

Jesus was led back a prisoner into the still silent city. He was brought in haste to the house of Annas, the ex-high priest, and father-in-law to the actual high priest; his house appears to have been adjoining that of Caiaphas.‡ Although dispossessed of the tiara, he had preserved a great influence over the Sanhedrim, which was full of his relations and creatures. Jesus had no more deadly enemy than this cunning head of a priestly family, inured to the intrigues of the Temple, and as a Sadducean and a priest animated with a double hatred to the Saviour. His intention probably was to prepare for the formal audience of the Sanhedrim. He plays in the trial of Jesus the part of an examining magistrate.§ In the absence of any clearly defined points of accusation, it was needful to take exceptional precautions to ensure the sentence. Annas asks Jesus of His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus replies, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and

* Luke xxii. 52, 53. † Matt. xxvi. 52.

‡ This may be inferred from the fact that John is introduced into the house of Annas through his relations with Caiaphas (John xviii. 13). See Godet II., p. 585.

§ John alone mentions the examination before Annas.

in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them; behold they know what I said." Nothing is more irritating to men of passion than calm like this. One of those present strikes the accused in the face. Jesus says meekly, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Such is His attitude under this vile outrage. He does not even betray the natural indignation, which on a similar occasion draws an anathema from St. Paul. The distance is vast between the greatest of the disciples and the Master. What majesty is there in such meekness!

As soon as the Sanhedrim could be assembled, Jesus was led away to the palace of Caiaphas. Just as He was leaving the house of Annas, He heard Peter declaring with oaths and curses, "I know not the man." It was his third denial. The first had been uttered in the vestibule of the palace, upon a remark of the portress who recognised him. The unhappy disciple had then taken refuge in the court, where the servants had lighted a great fire to warm themselves. Another maid-servant called forth his second denial. His provincial accent then made him the butt of the raillery of those present, who taunted him as a Galilean; it was on this provocation he uttered the cowardly denial which grieved the heart of his Master. At the same moment the cock crew. Peter remembered the prophetic warning which had so roused his ire, but above all he was melted by that look, full of sorrow and love, which Jesus cast upon him. He went out and wept bitterly.* He was to come forth from this depth of humiliation a new man. The fate of Judas was widely different: tortured by the

* The narrative of John, xviii. 15-19, alone bears the character of ocular testimony. In the synoptics we have no mention of the examination before Annas, and Peter's denial is not inserted at the true time and place. The discrepancies of detail are unimportant. Luke speaks of a servant man (xxii. 58), while Matthew and Mark speak of a maid (Matthew xxvi. 71; Mark xiv. 69.)

memory of his crime, he threw down in the Temple the terrible wages of his treachery, and then ended his accursed life on the field of Aceldama.*

The trial of Jesus was gone through according to form in presence of the Sanhedrim, presided over by Caiaphas. The endeavour was to establish, if possible, a ground of accusation which might ensure a sentence of capital punishment from the Roman governor, in whom alone was vested the power of life and death. The sitting was tumultuous. Jesus was arraigned not before judges but before implacable enemies, eager only to be avenged on Him. In order to give some foundation to the charge of sedition, two false witnesses were brought forward, who affirmed that they had heard Him say that He would destroy the Temple, and rebuild it in three days.† They interpreted these words in the most material sense, to educe from them a design of revolt against the national religion. The high priest himself urged Jesus to disown all claim to divine Sonship. Upon this, He rose to the full height of His dignity. At this decisive hour He did not hesitate to assume, in all its majesty, that title of Son of God, which was about to cost Him His life, precisely because His death would deprive it of all theocratic significance. "What further need have we of witnesses," exclaimed the high priest, rending his clothes in indignation; "behold now ye have heard his blasphemy." "Then," as St. Luke tells us, "said they, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, ye say that I am."‡

* According to the narrative of St. Peter, in the Acts, Judas himself bought the field in which he committed suicide (Acts i. 18); while according to Matthew xxvii. 6, 7, it was the Sanhedrim which purchased the field after his death with the price of his treason, and set it apart for the burial of strangers.

† M. Renan maintains that the same mode of procedure in trials of this kind is found point for point in the Talmud ("Vie de Jésus," p. 39–41). In our view, it is this very trial of Jesus Christ which has furnished this mode of procedure, the drawing up of which is of much subsequent date to His condemnation.

‡ Luke xxii. 70. 71.

Then said they, "He is guilty of death." The judges sent out the accused that they might take counsel together. It was during this interval that the menials of the temple heaped on Him their insults, spitting in His face, blindfolding and smiting Him, and in bitter irony calling on Him to use His prophetic gift and declare who was the smiter. The Sanhedrim decided to bring Him without delay before the tribunal of the proprætor, who was present at Jerusalem for the feasts. Horrible beyond comparison is this spectacle of the boasted sons of Abraham, dragging before a heathen judge the descendant of their kings, the subject of so many aspirations, of so many oracles. He is brought to the prætorium like the vilest criminal, by a fanatical crowd, headed by the chief magistrates of the nation.

III. Jesus before Pilate.

In front of the prætorium was a court paved with mosaic,* where waited the soldiers on duty. The Jews would not cross its threshold, lest they might be defiled by contact with anything profane on the eve of their greatest feast.† The governor before whom Jesus appeared was that same Pontius Pilate, of whose policy we have spoken as so ill-judged, in a land agitated by strong religious passions. He was one of those magistrates, by turns yielding and violent, who estimate nothing but force, and seek nothing but their personal interest. Such men are not cruel by nature, but they show themselves ready to sacrifice justice and the blood of the innocent, to the meanest gain or the slightest fear; without any fixed principle, they sometimes obey a good impulse, but there is no guarantee for the motive-power of the next hour. Pilate is a worthy representative of a society which has lost faith in religion, in morality, in everything. Up to this day those who have come before him have been all courtiers or men of faction; now for the first time he meets with a living conscience; he is confronted with that moral power against which Rome, the city of might, has made

* Hence the name Gabbatha (John xix. 13.) † John xviii. 28.

no provision, and which will snatch from her the world which she thinks she has enchained for ever. The character of Pilate is drawn with marvellous truthfulness in the story of our Gospels. He is a true Roman of the age of Tiberius, without faith in the gods, yet troubled by a dream, a man at once sceptical and superstitious, turning pale at the mere mention of disloyalty to Cæsar, and yet, through the judicial instinct of his race, recovering the sense of justice so soon as he mounts his tribunal. A veritable epicurean, he manifests impatient disdain at what appears to him a theological quarrel; no charge can be more ridiculous and frivolous in his eyes than one which bears upon religion; he would willingly throw the cause back upon the Sanhedrim, but he soon perceives that this door of escape is closed to him, since the case is one which may lead to capital punishment. He finds himself compelled to proceed with the trial, for, by a shameless equivocation, the enemies of Jesus accuse Him of rebellion against Cæsar for asserting His claim as Messiah. Now it is indubitable that they brought Him to that bar, solely because He had refused to lend Himself to any political action.

Then commenced that examination which brings out so signally the weakness of the representative of the sword, when confronted with the representative of truth. Mounted on his seat of honour, robed in his *toga*, surrounded by his soldiers, the judge appears as the miserable tool of the populace. The accused, on the other hand, preserves His dignity because He relies on God alone. The free man here is not the proud magistrate; it is the condemned at the bar. To the fierce invectives of the Jews, Jesus deigns no reply but silence. He does not pay them the honour of exculpating Himself. He will only answer Pilate, when He has been assured that his question is not a mere echo of the synagogue.

This first part of the examination was conducted in the outer tribunal, where the governor gave his decisions from an elevated seat, raised upon a richly-decorated marble platform. Desirous

to enquire more minutely into the case, Pilate retires into an inner hall, which was used for purposes of enquiry. There he asks Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?"—"Speakest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" —"Am I a Jew?" replies the Roman disdainfully. "Thine own people and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?" "My kingdom is not of this world," answered Jesus.* "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." The rough Roman soldier knows not how to conceive of a kingdom which owns no sword to guard it. "Art thou a king then?" he asks. "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." "What is truth?" replies Pilate, with the smile of that foolish wisdom which believes only in things visible.† He knows no more what is truth than what is justice, and therefore his good will, based only on a passing impression, will not stand against the popular clamour. He is impressed, however, by the simple majesty of Jesus, and his wife at the same moment sends him a warning message, that she has suffered many things in a dream because of the Galilean.‡ Pilate would willingly release Jesus if he could only devise any means for appeasing the Jews. Tired of their noisy imprecations, he seeks to escape a responsibility of which he feels a vague dread, and sends Jesus to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, then staying in Jerusalem for the feast, and who might be

* Ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (John xviii. 36).

† The scepticism of Pilate recalls the famous saying of Pliny; "Ut solum certum sit, nihil esse certi nec miserius quidquam homine nec superbius."

‡ This incident confirms the minute accuracy of the Gospel record. The historians of the time tell us, that the prohibition issued by Augustus against proconsuls taking their wives into their provinces, had fallen into desuetude in the time of Tiberius (Tacitus, "Annals" I. 40; II. 54).

regarded as His natural judge.* Jesus gives no reply to the questions put to Him in idle curiosity by this vile tyrant, stained with the blood of the Baptist. Herod having in vain sought to see some miracle done by Him, delivers Him to the soldiers. These array Him in a white robe and smite Him with their hands; then they bring Him back to the prætorium, where the final decision must be given.

Pilate tries one last expedient to save the accused. He proposes to release Him in honour of the approaching feast, conformably to a custom established by his predecessors, of granting an act of pardon to one Jewish prisoner at each Passover. The people, at the instigation of their religious leaders, clamour for the release of a vile murderer named Barabbas, and exclaim in one voice against Jesus, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate sentences Jesus to be scourged, which was sometimes the method of putting the accused to torture, sometimes the preliminary of crucifixion. He hopes that the Jews will feel themselves sufficiently avenged by this degrading punishment. The soldiers treat Jesus with refined cruelty. As if to carry on Herod's horrible mockery, they clothe Him in a purple robe, put a crown of thorns on His brow, and a reed in His hand, then scourge Him without pity. When the proprætor brings Him forth to the people, bleeding and insulted, saying, "Behold the man!" the cries of "Crucify him!" rise again with redoubled force. Feeling the case desperate, Pilate says to the Jews, "Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him." The judge re-enters the prætorium for a moment; he is troubled; the truth flashes a lightning gleam across his heart; he feels that this prisoner is unlike any he has ever known. As though catching a glimpse of His divine greatness, he asks Jesus, "Whence art thou?" As Jesus keeps silence, the Roman magistrate asserts his discretionary power.

* The tetrarch, according to Josephus, was in the habit of repairing to the holy city on the occasion of the solemn feasts ("Ant.," XVIII. 5, 3).

"Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?" The only answer he receives is the sublime defiance of the material power by the moral. "Thou could'st have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above: therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." If Pilate had listened but to his own heart, he would have immediately released Jesus, but his feeble impulses to right were not proof against the pressure from without; conscience alone stands like a rock against the strong floods of an infuriated crowd. Pilate is swayed most of all by that artful insinuation of the accusers, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." The Cæsar of his day was that Tiberius, under whom, according to Tacitus, the accusation of treason was almost always fatal.* Pilate openly sacrifices Jesus to his ambition, knowing that he is condemning an innocent man; in vain is it for him to wash his hands; the stain of blood remains indelible upon his forehead and upon his name; by his connivance he has given to this awful crime of the synagogue the concurrence of the heathen world; he has made it the crime of humanity, a crime the awful weight of which rests upon a whole fallen race.

IV. The Execution.

As soon as the condemnation had been pronounced, Jesus was delivered to the soldiery to be led to the place of execution. No punishment equalled in horror and infamy that of death by crucifixion;† it was only inflicted on the lowest of the people, on slaves or captives of war—those, in fact, who were considered beyond the pale of the law.‡ It was not permitted to sentence a Roman citizen to such a death, for how-

* "Majestatis crimen omnium accusationum complementum erat" (Tacitus, "Annals" III. 38).

† "Crudelissimum teterrimumque supplicium" (Cicero in "Verr." V. 64).

‡ "Servile supplicium" ("Id." 66).

ever great might have been his crime, the judges were bound to recognise in him the dignity of that proud city, which respected herself in the least of her children. Crucifixion, entirely foreign to the Jewish code, had been introduced into Jerusalem by the proconsuls. They sentenced to this most shameful death, political agitators and criminals of the lower orders. Crosses had been planted at the same time as the Roman eagles on the soil of Judæa, and were the tokens of a detested rule.* But we have already seen how enmity against Jesus overmastered hatred of the foreigner, in the hearts of the Pharisees. Thus they did not hesitate to demand for the Galilean a sentence of death, the very thought of which, on other occasions, would have roused all their indignation.

A great procession was formed. The crowd pressed behind the Roman soldiers charged with the execution of the sentence; these were headed by a mounted centurion.† The disciples were scattered; some of the pious women who had followed Jesus during the days of His ministry lingered on the skirts of the crowd, ready to seize the first opportunity of giving Him some fresh proof of their holy love. The condemned was preceded, according to Roman custom, by an inferior officer of the prætorium, who bore before him the block of white wood, on which the sentence of condemnation was written in large characters.‡ According to usage the prisoner carried his own cross;§ but Jesus, worn out by His night-watch of agony, by the long examinations He had undergone, by the cruel treatment and outrage He had received, fainted under the burden. The Roman soldiers, who regarding Judæa as a conquered country, did not hesitate at any time to demand onerous ser-

* Josephus, "Ant." XVII. 10, 10; XX. VI., 2.

† Mark xv. 39. The centurion who took the oversight of the execution was called *exactor mortis*, or *supplicio præpositus* (Tac., "Annals," III. 14; Sen., "De Ira" I. 16).

‡ Suetonius, "Caligula" 32; Eusebius, "H. E.," V. I. 19.

§ Plutarch, "Ser. num. vind.," c. IX.

vices of its inhabitants,* stopped on his way a certain Simon, of Cyrene,† coming out of the country; him they compelled to bear the cross of Christ, little dreaming that they were conferring on him the highest of all honours; for what glory can be compared with that of sharing such reproach? The Cyrenian was probably won to Jesus on this day; his sons, doubtless trained under his influence, stood forth subsequently among the distinguished members of the Church of Rome.‡ How would this Christian household rejoice to record, in their holiest ancestral annals, this bearing of the cross for Jesus!

The way which led from the prætorium to the place of execution was not long; it lay to the north-west of the Temple. At the gate of Jerusalem, which opened on this side, rose a little bare elevation called the hill of the skull, or Golgotha; it had been chosen as the place for executions, because, while lying beyond the walls,§ it was yet sufficiently near the town to allow spectators.

Just as the procession reached the fatal spot, the crowd opened, and Jesus saw close beside Him the group of pious women who had been following; they were accompanied by some Jews who had been the witnesses, perhaps even the subjects of His miracles; they had not had courage to protest in the prætorium against the false accusation of the Pharisees, but they could not restrain their emotion at this sorrowful moment. Their tears flowed as they beheld the preparations for death. Jesus alone rose above all these things. He would die as He had lived, forgetful of self; that over which he wept in this bitter hour was the woe of the unhappy city which had

* The philosopher Arrian has described, in a few words, these brutal proceedings of the Roman soldiery: "When a heavy task is imposed upon thee," he says, "accept it without a murmuring, else thou wilt only receive blows, without being able to help thyself" (Tholuck, "Glaubwürdigkeit," p. 362).

† A city of Lybian Africa.

‡ Mark xv. 21. Compare Rom. xvi. 13.

§ The punishment of crucifixion was always inflicted beyond the walls (Plautus, "Miles Gloriosus," Act II., Scene IV).

rejected Him. He knew that these timid friends who offered Him a tardy pity would be involved in the coming catastrophe. "Daughters of Jerusalem," He exclaimed, "weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children, for behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, cover us; for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"* In other words, if the innocent and the just are thus treated, how shall it be with the guilty? As a fact, before many years had passed away, the Romans could not find room enough on the soil of Jerusalem to set up the crosses, on which they put to death the rebel Jews.†

The instrument of torture was not of great height, since the lips of Jesus could be reached by a soldier offering Him vinegar to drink from a sponge placed on a reed.‡ The cross was in the form of a T. A sort of block placed in the centre was intended to support the sufferer.§ The hands, and probably the feet of the crucified, were fastened with nails, after having been tightly bound.‖

Three crosses were set up at the same time, for two thieves had been brought from their cell to be put to death with Jesus. The writing placed above the head of Christ, bore in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the words, *This is the King of the Jews.*¶

* Luke xxii.; 28–38.

† Josephus, "Bell. Jud." V. 11, 1.

‡ Matt. xxvii. 48.

§ *In quo requiescit qui clavis affigitur* (Irenæus, "Adv. Hær." II. 42.)

‖ The whole ancient Church applied to Jesus the 16th verse of Psalm xxii., *They pierced my hands and my feet.* No doubt the application was founded on an old tradition. The passage, Luke xxiv. 39, *Behold my hands and my feet,* seems decisive on this point. In support of this opinion the lines of Plautus may be adduced ("Mostell" II. 1, 13). *Ut affligantur bis pedes bis brachia.*

¶ Luke xxiii. 38.

They expressed the bitter irony of the Roman governor for the subject people, whom he delighted to irritate, even at the moment when against his conscience he was giving them satisfaction. It was a method of avenging himself for the violence they had done to him, in compelling him to deliver Jesus to their will. He did not know that this contrast between so low an origin and so glorious a title, which seemed to him only a cause for mockery, was the distinctive character of the new religion, and that there is no higher revelation of the free and sovereign power of the divine Spirit, than this independence of all the material conditions of greatness. He silences the remonstrances of the Jews with the haughty words, so characteristic of the Roman, "That which I have written, I have written." "*Quod scriptum est, est scriptum!*"

The preparations for death are completed; the moment is come to bind the sufferers and nail them to the accursed tree. According to Jewish custom, they offer Jesus a bitter draught, intended to stupify the sufferer, and to some degree to deaden the agony.* But Jesus will not draw calm and peace from a narcotic. He will win them in full conflict; His death is to be a free sacrifice; and far from seeking to deaden His moral vigour, He is about rather to gather up all its force. His death is a voluntary immolation. Jesus is at once victim and priest, since He offers up Himself. Thus He refuses the stupifying cup, that He may drink to the last drop the cup of suffering.

The soldiers who act as His executioners fasten Him to the cross; their countenances bespeak a mixture of scorn and cruel hardness: they fulfil their task as they have done a hundred times before. In sooth, what care they for the execution of one criminal more or less in a conquered country? Are they not accustomed to shed blood like water at the command of

* Matt. xxvii. 34. We find the following words in the Talmud: "When a man was led out to death, a cup was given in which were some drops of wine mingled with incense, to deaden his sensibility (*Gemara Cod.* Sanhedrim). See Tholuck, "Glaubwürdigkeit," p. 362. Myrrh produced the same effect.

their generals? Jesus, self-forgetful even in such a moment, pities the brutal ignorance, which hides from the very actors in this dark drama the bearing of their deeds. "Father," He cries, "forgive them; they know not what they do."* Thus, even in the hour which seems to belong to the powers of darkness, love is stronger than hate. The victory is with Jesus, for in pardoning such a crime He shows how fully He possesses His soul. The very vapours of the pit can bring no alloy to His divine charity; He loves in spite of all; those whom He pardons are conquered by this infinitè and triumphant love, which, expressing itself in prayer, is a manifestation of His abiding oneness with the Father. And yet sorrow and shame go on gathering and thickening around Him!

He undergoes the slow and terrible torture of crucifixion, which does not cut life off at a stroke, but exhausts it drop by drop, and produces fearful agony in the nervous system. Wherever His eye turns, He sees only objects of grief and shame. On His right hand and on His left, are the two thieves crucified with Him. At the foot of the cross, the soldiers, using their privilege of sharing the poor spoils of the condemned, are parting His garments among them; and, blending coarse tavern play with their brutal sport, are casting lots for His seamless vesture.† Around the gate of the city is a tumultuous crowd, whose fierce and cruel clamour falls upon His ears. The greater number, doubtless, watch His agony only as one of those spectacles which amuse the vulgar multitude; but in the foremost rank are the creatures of the Sanhedrim. These wretches pass before Him, wagging their heads in token of disdain,‡ and casting in His teeth the very words which formed the basis of the false charge on which He had been condemned in the morning. Probably the hirelings, who had born false witness against Him at the bar of the

* Πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ οἴδασι τί ποιοῦσι (Luke xxiii. 34).
† John xix. 23, 24; Matt. xxvii. 35; Luke xxiii. 34.
‡ Κινοῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν, καὶ λέγοντες (Matt. xxvii. 39).

Sanhedrim, were found again before the cross to which they had helped to bring Him. "O, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross."* The soldiers stupidly repeat taunts which are without meaning to them, which they only know are words of outrage. But it is not enough for the heads of the hierarchy to insult Jesus through their instruments; their hatred burns to find yet more direct and free expression against the bleeding Galilean. Judges, priests, doctors as they are, men most scrupulous in the observance of forms in common life, they yet join with the rude populace in heaping insult on their dying foe. Nothing could more clearly betray their furious rage against Him, and the terror with which He had inspired them. With an infernal refinement of cruelty, possible only to degraded souls, in which evil has taken the gigantic proportions peculiar to religious crimes, they taunt Jesus with His own miracles. "He saved others, himself he cannot save."† They cannot find words of irony enough for this pretended King of Israel suffering between two thieves, for the Son of God on the point of death; and they in their turn repeat the mocking cry, "Come down from the cross."‡ Thus, while the pardoning love of Jesus comes forth triumphant from the terrible ordeal of suffering, the hatred of the Pharisees is not disarmed even by the sight of the cross. Their bitter malice is the satanic reverse of the prayer of the victim for His murderers. In truth, the members of the Sanhedrim re-enact at Calvary the scene of the morning; they repeat before the Crucified that which they said to the Accused. Can we wonder? Not for an instant did they act as judges, they were throughout implacable enemies using the brutal right of might.

It would not be possible, however, that in presence of this supreme manifestation of the love of Christ, impiety alone

* Matt. xxvii. 40.

† Ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι (Matt. xxvii. 42).

‡ Καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ (Mark xv. 32).

should lift its head. Of the two robbers at His side, one mingled his broken voice with the blasphemies of the Jews; the other, touched by the holy calm of Jesus, and more still by that expression of heavenly love which beamed upon His brow, yielded to the mysterious awe from which even Pilate himself could not escape. For the first time he felt himself in contact with perfect holiness, and he beheld it mocked and crucified! Reproving his comrade, he said, "Does thou not fear God, seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss."* The language of the penitent thief forbids us to suppose him to have been (as has been said) one of those fanatics, who like Theudas and Barabbas, had set up the standard of revolt. If he had acted such a part, he would have gloried in it instead of confessing his guilt, and would have died as an enthusiast. No; he was only a common malefactor, and it was for this he was chosen, so as to throw the more dishonour on the death of Jesus. But defiled with crimes as he was, his conscience was not dead, and awaking, it did homage to perfect holiness. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." "This day," replies Jesus, "shalt thou be with me in paradise."† A sublime response to the defiance hurled at Him by the scribes! He comes not down from the cross at their challenge, but He hangs there to pardon and save; the pierced hands of the sufferer open heaven to an immortal soul. Never was His divine power more manifest than at this hour.

Suddenly, in the midst of the crowd, appeared a little group who had crept through it unobserved. It consisted of three women and one disciple. There was Mary, the mother of Jesus, her heart pierced through with the sword which the venerable Simeon had predicted; the depths of her agonized love are expressed in those words of the ancient hymn:

* Luke xxiii. 40, 41.

† *Ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ* (Luke xxiii. 43).

Stabat mater juxta crucem,
Dum pendebat filius.

Her sister Mary, the wife of Cleophas, was with her, as also Mary Magdalene, who brings to the Crucified the tribute of her tears, as the other Mary of Bethany had brought her precious ointment. The disciple was John, the friend of the Master. Touching heroism of love which nothing could arrest, nothing terrify, even in that hour of universal desertion and extreme agony! With what consolation must the eye of Jesus have rested on those faces, full of intense and tender sympathy! Possibly Mary and John were better comforters to Him at Calvary than the angel had been in Gethsemane. But even in that dying moment, He did not dwell on that which affected Himself. "Woman," He said to His mother, who was leaning on the beloved disciple, "Woman, behold thy son."*

Two hours had passed since the nailing to the cross. Death was approaching. In the case of Jesus it was not caused so much by the actual suffering of the crucifixion, as by all which had preceded and accompanied it. Thick darkness veiled the light of day; this was the indication not of an eclipse (which would not have been possible then, as the moon was at the full), but of an earthquake.† God permitted this coincidence the better to mark the greatness of the event. It was at this extreme moment, when passing through that unutterable anguish which precedes the breaking of the tie between body and soul, at least in every case of conscious dissolution, that Jesus uttered the piercing cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani! My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"‡ The cry of the psalmist thus broke naturally from His lips. Most unjust is it to regard these words as a proof of the divine curse resting upon the holy victim. The forsaken need not be the accursed; an

* Γύναι, ἰδοὺ ὁ υἱός σου (John xix. 26).

† Julius Africanus had observed this. It appears that at the same time an earthquake overthrew a great part of the city of Nicea (Neander, "Vie de Jésus" II. p. 447).

‡ Mark xv. 34.

accursed man does not call God his God, does not dispose of heaven, does not commend his spirit into the hands of his Father. But it remains true, nevertheless, that death is the wages of sin, and a fearful anomaly in God's creation. What must it not have been in the eyes of Him, whose rightful title is the Prince of Life, and who had done nothing to merit death? To His view it was inseparable from an awful crime, in which were unchained all the powers of evil. The soul, no doubt, dies not, but at the moment when it is about to break its tenement of clay, it is conscious of the transitory but terrible suffering of ceasing to be; it is, as it were, separated for an instant from the principle and active cause of life, since the organs which are its actual instruments of thought begin to fail. Can it be conceived what such an experience must have been to the only and well-beloved Son of the Father? His failing consciousness could no longer grasp with clearness the eternal object of its love; the face, which is fulness of joy, was veiled from Him. How should He not exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is not necessary, in order to explain this bitter cry, to suppose that the indignation of the Father was kindled against His Son at the moment when He was fulfilling the most holy act, and drinking the last drops of the cup which the flesh had trembled to take. The anguish of such agony for a being like Jesus, sufficiently explains the piercing accents that burst from His lips.

The Jews imagined that He was calling for Elias, an idea accounted for by the wide-spread belief, that this great prophet was about to re-appear to prepare the way for Messiah. A feeling of terror spread with the deepening darkness. Again Jesus cried, "I thirst."* Such words are a convincing proof that there is no resemblance between Jesus and the Messiah of eastern Asia. Buddha would have felt it a dishonour to utter such a cry. But Jesus did not die to annihilate the body; He died, not to destroy the physical life, but to renew the

* Διψῶ (John xix. 28).

spiritual life by His sacrifice. Thus He affected none of that false impassibility which is the highest ideal of India. Between the Crucified, who asks that His burning thirst may be allayed, and the fakir who allows himself to be crushed beneath the chariot of his god, there is all the distance which separates a free and holy sacrifice of love from a deed of frantic suicide.

When Jesus had moistened His lips with the sponge dipped in vinegar, which seems to have been at hand for the purpose,* He felt that His last moment was come. "Father," He exclaimed, "into thy hands I commend my spirit;" then came the closing utterance, "It is finished."† In truth, this death was the great *consummatum est* of the religious history of mankind. "It hath pleased the Father," says St. Paul, "by the blood of his cross to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven."

The evangelists, especially St. John, in relating the last moments of Jesus, seem struck with the coincidence of many circumstances of this great scene with the features of ancient prophecy. They take pleasure in bringing these forward with a minuteness which cannot be attributed to Jesus Himself. His spirit soared high above all such considerations. We have already seen that the Old Testament may be regarded throughout as one great type of Redemption; every event of the sacred history had a reference to the future, and to the believing Jews the future was always the kingdom of the Messiah. The evangelists are not then mistaken in the correspondence they establish between the texts of the sacred books and the facts which were accomplished on Calvary. But it would be derogating from the dignity of this incomparable drama, to regard it as the mere carrying out of a scriptural programme minutely laid down beforehand.

* This vinegar was perhaps the *posca*, or bitter draught, that the Roman soldiers carried about with them.

† Πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου (Luke xxiii. 46). Τετέλεσται (John xix. 30).

At the very moment of Jesus' death, occurred the earthquake of which the deepening darkness had been the sign. The veil which divided the Temple sanctuary was rent in twain,* as if to declare that the time of a particular priesthood had come to an end, and the era of a universal priesthood had commenced. Long-buried bodies of the saints arose and appeared to some of the disciples. Many of the people who were come together, beholding the things that were done, seemed to have been struck with awe, and returned smiting their breasts. The centurion, who had commanded the company charged to attend the crucifixion, was among the foremost to own himself vanquished, and to exclaim, "Surely this was a righteous man."† He had, in truth, never beheld such a spectacle; he had seen his comrades in arms die boldly in the day of battle; he had probably witnessed the reckless temerity of the gladiator giving his life to the sword, but he had never known till that day the heroism of self-immolating obedience and the holy grandeur of sacrifice.

In Judæa the crucified were not left for an indefinite time upon the cross. It was the practice to hasten their death, and then to bury them.‡ This usage would be the more strictly observed on the eve of a great feast The soldiers broke with a club the legs of the two thieves. They would have inflicted the same treatment on Jesus, but perceiving that He was dead already, they pierced His side with a spear, and forthwith there came thereout blood and water—a circumstance explained by the fact that He had but just expired.§ The evangelist

* Matt. xxvii. 51–56.

† Ὄντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν (Luke xxiii. 47.)

‡ According to the Roman custom the corpse was left to rot on the cross, and left to the birds of prey (Juvenal xliv. 77). Plautus, "Miles Gloriosus," II. 4–19. Respect for the mortal remains of man had modified this usage in Judæa (Josephus, "Bell. Jud.," IV. 5, 2. Compare Deuteronomy xxi. 22, 23).

§ John xix. 35-37. This explanation appears to be the best answer to the objections made to the sacred narrative from a physiological point of view, according to which nothing is more rare than the decomposition of blood in a corpse.

lays great stress on this incident, doubtless in order to establish the reality of the human nature of Jesus in opposition to the Gnostics, who in their wild theories attributed to him a body of subtle and ideal substance.*

Joseph of Arimathæa obtained from Pilate leave to lay the corpse in his own sepulchre, which was hollowed out in a rock close to the place of execution. He wrapped it in linen and sweet spices, according to Jewish custom.† Nicodemus, forgetting his prudence in the solemn sadness of the day, boldly joined himself to Joseph.‡ A great stone was rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, sat weeping beside the tomb where the Lord was laid. The other women, who had followed Him from Galilee, hastened to prepare spices before the commencement of the Sabbath, so that as soon as it was over, they might pay Him the last honours of the dead.

Soon, at the request of the members of the Sanhedrim, who feared the body might be taken away, soldiers were set in the garden of Joseph of Arimathæa to keep a diligent watch.§

* "This is he that came by water and by blood, even Jesus Christ" (1 John v. 6). It is difficult to harmonise the synoptics and John's Gospel as to the precise hour of the crucifixion. According to John, the sentence was pronounced at the sixth hour, that is at noon. Now according to Mark xv. 25, Jesus was crucified at nine in the morning. It has been supposed that John reckoned the hours according to the Roman method, which made the day begin at midnight The sixth hour would then be not noon, but six o'clock in the morning. But how can all that preceded the crucifixion be supposed to have taken place between the rising of the sun and six o'clock? We are much inclined to admit the explanation given by Lange and M. Godet. Both day and night were simply divided into four parts, of three hours each. The evangelists kept to the general divisions, without binding themselves to minutely exact observations, which would not have been compatible with the emotion of such a day. We may add that with Matthew and Mark the scourging is the beginning of the punishment. (See Godet II. 606-607)

† Matt. xxvii. 59-60; Luke xxiii. 50-56. ‡ John xix. 38-42.

§ Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

V. The significance of the death of Jesus.

Jesus is laid in the deep stillness of the grave, among the voiceless and unhearing dead, over whom we call and weep and lament in vain. And yet at this very hour the angels who proclaimed His birth with songs of praise are raising a hymn of triumph; for this death, in its dark reality, is nevertheless the redemption of the world! It is the crown and consummation of that holy life, which from the first day to the last was a free offering to God. We have not now to vindicate its spotless sanctity. If this is not self-evident from our narrative, nothing that we can add will avail to prove it. It is vain to tell us that our knowledge of Jesus is limited, and that the documents from which we draw it are incomplete. The entire spiritual life is revealed in certain characteristic actions; and when it appears absolutely pure in its great manifestations, it is impossible that it should have been previously stained by sin. The water which has flowed over a sandy or muddy bed does not regain at any point in its course perfect transparency.

Sin leaves its trace and its stigma on us even when its has had no human witness. In the Christ of the Gospel, conscience recognises the realisation of its ideal. Beside, it is not correct to assert that we possess no information as to that portion of His life which was passed in obscurity; we may fairly invoke, as to the period preceding His ministry, the implied testimony of His mother and His brethren, who were also His disciples. They had seen Him not only in the official and public fulfilment of His mission, but had gathered around Him in the hours of repose and retirement. Hence their faith in His perfect holiness rested on the deepest conviction; had they doubted it for a single day they would not have braved for Him so many perils and reproaches. St. John speaks in their name to all, when he exclaims, "We beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."* His enemies paid Him the most striking, though the most involuntary homage, when, in

* John i. 14.

the deadliness of their hatred they could find no accusation against Him but one single saying, distorted from its true sense, and were compelled to purchase false witnesses to bring even this shadow of a charge.

But beyond these testimonies of friends and enemies, we have the testimony of Jesus Himself. "The prince of this world," He said, "hath nothing in me."* "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"† Thus He, the humblest of men, the least desirous of personal glory, affirms without hesitation His perfect holiness. And yet no one has a higher estimate than He of the moral law; no one is less satisfied with appearances. Assuredly the Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount could not content Himself with mere legal piety or correct formalism; He never ceased for a single day to wage war on hypocrisy, and to require spiritual before external purity. Thus when, after such declarations, He is heard to proclaim His own perfect holiness, He must be regarded either as an impostor worse than the Pharisees, or adoringly recognised as the Holy One of God. That which we know of His life forbids us to hesitate between the two suppositions.

His holiness is one with His love; for the law of love is the supreme moral law, that which brings us nearest to the very type of good, or rather to the essential and eternal good, which is God. Now we have seen every act and word of Jesus during His whole career marked with this divine seal; He gave Himself to His Father and to mankind in one great self-sacrifice up to the day of final offering. This love, which shone in the mild majesty of His words, and sometimes kindled them to holy indignation, which diffused itself around in deeds of mercy and prevented His recoiling from any fatigue, or toil, or danger,—this love, infinite, inexhaustible, which gave harmony to His whole moral life, blending meekness with power, humility with heroism—how it shone forth on the accursed

* Ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἄρχων, ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν (John xiv. 30).
† Τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας (John viii. 46).

tree—the bloody altar on which the flame of the sacrifice burnt in all its ardour, consuming the victim!

It is just this perfect holiness which raises His death to the height of a free sacrifice. When sinful man expires, he undergoes the punishment he has merited; he pays his debt to eternal justice. But Jesus, in dying, bears the punishment of others; He suffers for the race with which He has identified Himself, and this generous suffering voluntarily accepted, is an act of love and obedience. Hence its redemptive and reparative character. We see Him at Calvary as we have seen Him in the desert of temptation and in Gethsemane, and throughout the whole course of His career, fulfilling the great law of creation, which is to do the will of God. But on this day, that will presents itself to Him in its severest form, since it involves the acceptance of the most bitter consequences of the Fall. It is thus that in the name of mankind He retracts the rebellion of Eden; He brings back the heart of man to God; but He brings it back a willing sacrifice, and thus renews the broken link between the fallen race and the Father, who waits only the return of the lost to open wide His arms of welcome.

Let us beware of setting up at the cross a sort of opposition between Jesus and God. In saving the world by His sacrifice, Jesus fulfils the purpose of His Father. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."* "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."† His justice is only the holy majesty of His love, which demands a response at any cost. Here at last is the response so long waited for, given in this sacrifice which exhausts, by accepting them, all the consequences of sin. Jesus is indeed under the stroke of the Father's anger, since death is the punishment God has pronounced on a rebel race; in entering our world, He has entered an accursed region; and pre-eminently in the passage through the dark valley of death must He feel the weight of

* John iii. 16. † 2 Cor. v. 19.

actual malediction,—the desert of sin not His own. But by His obedience and love, He transforms and disarms the curse, since in death itself He remains one with God His Father, and reconciles us with Him. There is then nothing in His sufferings resembling a direct curse from God resting on Himself. Jesus dies not as one of the lost; all He knew of hell was the diabolical hatred which nailed Him to the tree.

If the cross is not a simple manifestation of divine love, neither is it an act of retaliation, or the vengeance of heaven upon earth, as if God waited to pardon till the sufferings of His Son equalled in immensity the greatness of our rebellion,—a thing in itself impossible, for an infinite penalty could not be exhausted in a few hours. The cross is the means of reconciliation; it is by it man, in the person of a holy victim, comes back to the God who has been waiting to receive him since the world began. If this holy Being, who represents the human race, suffers more than any of His brethren, it is as we have shown in speaking of the agony in Gethsemane, precisely because of His holiness and His love; He suffers not alone for Himself, but for all generations of mankind; in the strength of His sympathy, He bears in Himself all the shame and all the misery of sin. He repents for us, and in the crime of which He is the victim, He sees and bewails the darkest exhibition of human depravity. His compassion fills up the measure of His sufferings by making Him acquainted with such bitterness as remorse, which His own sinless nature could never have known. It is in this sense that He descends into hell to save us. Stephen could die joyful and triumphant; the feeblest Christian may so die; but Jesus could not, because infinite love, in conflict with infinite evil, could not escape unutterable anguish.

But this death is itself redemption, and its necessary consequence is a triumphant resurrection.

CHAPTER VI.

RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. The Facts.

WORDS cannot describe the consternation in which the friends of Jesus were plunged, during the long hours which elapsed between the crucifixion and the resurrection. The disciples were assembled, perhaps, in that very upper chamber in which had passed the touching scenes of the last farewell, and which still seemed to echo with the voice they thought never to hear again.* Nothing was further from their expectation than the resurrection; they imagined that all was ended for earth, and felt nothing but the vast void created by such a separation. Their hearts remained tenderly attached to Jesus, but their love at such an hour could not but be full of sorrow and dismay. They talked together of the things which He had suffered, and of the ingratitude of His people, of their own weakness; but his death, considered in itself, without the prospect of approaching triumph, was to them a cause of despair. It was as though the great stone of His sepulchre had been rolled upon their feeble faith. They were like men crushed. The pious women who had followed Jesus to the foot of the cross were about to pay Him the last funeral honours, by bringing the spices which they had prepared by the dying light of the day of crucifixion, and which proved alike their incomprehension of His words and their tender

* The apostles and disciples were evidently together in one place, for the women brought them the news immediately (Luke xxiv. 9–11).

attachment to His person. They waited with impatience the legal end of the Sabbath to complete their mournful task.

At break of day they went to the sepulchre. What a scene awaited them there! The great stone was rolled away, the tomb was empty; two angels in white raiment appeared to them, saying, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen." Extreme joy overwhelms the spirit as completely as great sorrow; it was hard to these women to pass from utter despondency to surpassing happiness: such a sudden transition from dark night to perfect day could not be accomplished without a shock. In the first confusion of impressions, trembling with joy and affright, they were unable to carry the great tidings to the apostles. One of them appears to have left the rest, as soon as one glance into the rocky tomb had convinced her, that the body she sought was not there. This was Mary Magdalene, "out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils." She gives herself no time to look closer into the empty grave, therefore she does not see the vision of angels, and believes that His body has been stolen away. Excited at the thought of such a profanation she runs to tell the disciples. At the first words, Peter and John set out for the sepulchre. John outruns Peter, and stooping down, looks in; Peter, more bold, enters, and sees the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that was about His head wrapped together in a place by itself —clear tokens that the body had not been violently taken away. "Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed."*

The other apostles, attaching no importance to what was told them, did not follow Peter and John. The possibility of a resurrection did not enter their minds. Soon after Mary Magdalene had left the other women, Jesus Himself appeared to them. This meeting dispelled the terror which had sealed their lips as they stood by the empty grave, and they repaired to the apostles, to whom Peter and John had not yet returned.

* John xx. 8.

They found them still plunged in deepest grief, and the testimony they brought, so far from being relieved, was regarded as an idle tale.*

While the disciples were weeping tears of despair which faith might soon have dried, the Risen Saviour made Himself known to Mary Magdalene in a manner well adapted to dispel all her doubts, for never was stronger proof given of moral identity. She had returned to that sepulchre which was to her the dearest and most sacred spot on earth. The angels who had spoken to her companions were there again, and put to her the same question as to the rest; she had for answer only the same sad words she had spoken to the disciples, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Not even this bright appearance of white-robed angels could distract her an instant from her grief. What was this glorious vision to her? What she sought was the dead body of the Crucified. Suddenly Jesus stood by her, but through her tears she did not, on the first glance, recognise Him; she took Him to be the gardener of Joseph of Arimathæa; and, absorbed in her tender, eager anxiety, she replied to the Master's question, "Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Touching and artless love, profoundly true and human, and atoning for its blindness by its strength! "Mary," said Jesus, and the cloud was scattered, and she knew the voice which once brought her a miraculous deliverance. It was indeed He, and she fell at his feet, exclaiming, "Rabboni!" Triumphant faith sprung up from the exchange of these two words.† But this faith needed yet to be purified. Jesus would be loved henceforth not only as the most perfect friend, but supremely as the Son of God; the era of the in-

* Matt. xxviii. 9. The appearance of Jesus to these women can only have taken place after the departure of Peter and John, on the news brought by Mary Magdalene.

† John xx. 11–16.

visible Christ was to succeed to the days of the Christ visible, whose look might be returned, whose hand might be pressed. Mary, who but a moment ago was so absorbed in anxiety about the mortal remains of her Master, and who was ready at this moment to lavish on Him tokens of an affection too human even in its exquisite purity, was as yet far from this exalted spirituality. She needed to learn that the risen Redeemer stood on the threshold of that elevated region which is only reached by prayer. The *Noli me tangere* was a prophetic protest against all the miserable forms which mistaken devotion has invented in the course of ages. "Touch me not," exclaims Jesus, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God."* The piety which is worthy of Christ unites holy reverence with holy familiarity, and does not make a fetish of Him who has inaugurated the reign of the Spirit upon earth.

Mary bore her message faithfully, but she was no more successful than her companions in convincing those of the apostles who had not been to the tomb, of the truth of her story.†

While the friends of Jesus were finding it so hard to believe the event, which ought to have filled them with joy, the Jews, according to the first Gospel, were in consternation at the rumour. The iniquitous judges who had not feared to suborn false witnesses, had no more hesitation in bribing the guard at the tomb; these mercenaries agreed to accuse the disciples of having stolen away the body of the Master, in order to declare that He was not risen from the dead.‡ A new proof have we here of the powerlessness of mere prodigies to produce any true change of heart. The earth shaken to its foundations, the sepulchre suddenly opened, the appearance of the celestial messengers,—none of these marvellous events had produced any effect on these sordid souls. A few pieces of money could

* John xx. 17. † Mark xvi. 11. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 11–15.

outweigh them all. Amazement only startles the spirit, does not subdue it. Of what avail would it have been then for Jesus to show Himself openly to the people who had crucified Him?

The mental condition of the disciples, after what they had heard in the morning, is perfectly described in the words of two of them, who towards the evening of that great day walk to Emmaus,* a little village situated at sixty stadia from Jerusalem, on the borders of the country of Benjamin, at the foot of the hill Mizpeh, the famous abode of Samuel. Perhaps they are natives of that place; perhaps they seek to escape the noise of the city for quiet meditation. Absorbed in their own thoughts, they pursue the lonely way. One thing alone seems certain to them—the shameful death of their Master; what has been told them of the empty tomb, and the vision of angels, has not availed to dispel their grief, or to dry their tears over the ruin of all their hopes. "We thought that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done†" These words, which express so bitter a disappointment, are spoken to the very one best able to refute them. The two disciples have been joined by a stranger who has asked them the reason of their sadness. So far are they from believing in the great miracle of the resurrection that they do not recognise Him. The veil which covers their eyes begins to fall, while the Master expounds to them in all the Scriptures, the mystery so amazing to the Jews, of glory inaugurated by suffering and death. Without yet comprehending this lofty teaching, they are profoundly moved, and as they draw near to Emmaus, they press Him to remain with them on the simple plea; "Abide with us, for the day is far spent." When the Master, seated at the same table with them, lifts His eyes to heaven to bless the bread, they hesitate no longer, and as He vanishes from their sight, they exclaim, "Did not our hearts burn within

* Now El-Kubeibeh. (Robinson III. p. 281.) † Luke xxiv. 21.

us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Then, as ever, it was the light of the soul which scattered the darkness of the understanding. Now they, like Mary, believe in the resurrection, for they have seen and heard the Risen One. The two disciples, one of whom only is named,* at once returned to Jerusalem, feeling indeed that they could not keep to themselves such tidings of great joy. Joy and sorrow, both are shared in the family of Christ. The very foundation of the Church is this spiritual communion.

The two disciples had hardly reached the upper chamber, where their brethren were assembled with closed doors for fear of the Jews, when Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst.† Bewildered with surprise and joy, they durst hardly believe in the glad reality, and were ready to suppose it was His spirit. But they were constrained to yield to the force of evidence. "Behold my hands and my feet," said the Master to them. "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Jesus gave them even more convincing proof: He ate before them a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb. It was indeed Himself. Who could doubt it as those sublime words were uttered—"Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This was not yet the great effusion of the Pentecost; but for

* Cleopas (Luke xxiv. 18). Tradition supposes the other to be Luke.

† Luke xxiv. 36. There is no reason, therefore, for supposing Jesus to have traversed the distance in any extraordinary manner, since the two disciples arrived before Him. As to the opinion that He entered the room by passing through the wall or the unopened door, there is nothing in the text to warrant it. Such a prodigy seems to us made unlikely by the palpable proof Jesus gives of His corporeal substance (Luke xxiv. 39-43; John xx. 20). Calvin, in his commentary, strongly opposes such an explanation. The miracle might have consisted in the doors opening of themselves to admit Him. We cannot describe its nature; only it is needful to beware of every theory which would fancifully idealise the bodily life of Jesus.

the Son of God to promise is to give, and there is no hindrance to our supposing a partial communication of the Spirit in this hour. Thomas was absent at the time of this sacred scene, and would not be convinced by the testimony of his friends. "Except I thrust my hand into his side I will not believe." Merciful condescension of Christ! He grants even this demand to His apostle, because He knows him to be honest and sincere, but He mingles a reproach with the unmerited favour. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed. Blessed are they which have not seen and yet believed." * Blessed are those who have rested satisfied with a divine word of assurance, and who have seen with the eye of faith! Thomas speaks for the believers of every age when he exclaims, "My Lord and my God." His is the faith of the primitive Church, the faith of the Church universal, the true apostolic creed, not elaborated in councils or fashioned by traditions, but the spontaneous *credo* of the Christian soul, adoringly uttered on the knees before Christ.

The apostle Paul mentions one appearance of the risen Redeemer to James, the brother of the Lord. † May we not venture to suppose that Mary, the mother of James and of Jesus, felt in that day that the sword which had pierced through her soul was withdrawn for ever? Glorious must have been her consolation after agonies so unutterable.

Galilee was the great meeting place appointed for the disciples with the risen Saviour. It was in this favoured scene of His public ministry, that He would show Himself to the largest number of them. The Gospels mention two of these appearances in Galilee. The first took place on the shores of the Lake of Tiberias, where He had known some days of glory, in the midst of an enthusiastic multitude. But what was such brief, transitory glory, born of precarious popular favour, compared to that which He brought back from the grave, after overcoming sin and death? Seven of His apostles were gathered

* John xx. 27-29. † 1 Cor. xv. 7.

by the shores of the lake; those of them who had long lived by the fishing craft, and among whom were Peter and John, had spent the night in their boat on the deep, toiling for their daily bread. During all these long hours they had taken nothing. In the morning Jesus stood on the shore; but they did not recognise Him till at His suggestion the net was thrown on the right side of the ship, and enclosed at once a great multitude of fishes. Then John exclaimed, "It is the Lord." Peter, who had laid aside his garment, filled with a wild, fearful joy, threw himself into the lake—and swam to the shore. The boat was drawn to the strand, and, as in former days, the Master and the disciples sat down to eat together. Peter dared hardly lift his eyes to the face of Him whom he had denied; doubtless he asked himself what right he had to take his place among the apostles of the Lord. But Jesus restored him to his office by a word which called forth at once bitter memories and earnest aspirations—a truly divine word which laid low and lifted up at the same moment. "Simon, son of Jonas," said Christ, "lovest thou me more than these?" Three times this sacred sword, wounding, and saving while it wounded, was plunged into the heart of the disciple, as if to recall his three-fold denial, and the debt he had contracted in the court of the high priest. Three times Peter replied with a full purpose of soul, which was no longer a presumptuous reliance on himself, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Truly humbled and repentant, he was anew invested by the Master with his office, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs." None is more fit to be the bearer of the message of mercy to men than he who has just recovered from a fall, and has his own sin covered by divine forgiveness. "Follow me," Jesus said to Peter, repeating the call given long before on those same shores, at the commencement of His ministry. The disciple knows now what it is to follow a crucified Master; could he have forgotten, he would have been speedily recalled to the reality by the enigmatical words which, in after years, were to

find their sanguinary solution at Rome. "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." This was a prediction of captivity and death for the impetuous son of Jonas. But it was also an assurance to him that he was counted worthy to suffer for Jesus; no restoration to fellowship with Him could be more complete than this. The ardent and proud disciple was warned of his approaching fall; while faithfulness even in bonds and on the cross was predicted of the contrite heart. Peter would fain know what future is in store for John. "If I will that he tarry till I come," says Jesus, "what is that to thee? follow thou me." This saying, wrongly understood, gave rise to the superstitious idea that John should not die; nothing was further from the real meaning of the Master. He would grant no satisfaction to idle curiosity. We are to pass through the uncertain conditions of human life, contenting ourselves with the blessed certainties of eternity. Such was this interview by the Lake of Tiberias; the quiet, peaceful scene of the early days of His ministry is unchanged, but the freshness of morning has given place to the calm glories of the evening hour.

The second appearance of Jesus in Galilee took place on one of the mountains bordering the lake, in presence of a numerous company, for it was doubtless there He was seen by above five hundred brethren at once. He spoke as the Son of God. "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."* Thus all national barriers are levelled, for these disciples are sent forth to conquer the whole world. The rite of baptism is instituted. This is neither the baptism of Jewish proselytes, nor that of the Forerunner administered in the

* Matt. xxviii. 16–20.

name of the coming Messiah; it is baptism in the name of the finished salvation; it is the sacred sign of the renewed life, the sacrament of that conversion by which we are buried with Christ crucified for us, that we may rise with the risen Christ, as the Lord's supper is the sacrament of the holy life, which is only conversion continued and confirmed. Now Jesus may ascend to heaven, for He lives in His Church, and through her the work of redemption will be carried on in the earth.

Forty days after His resurrection, the Master took leave of His disciples at Bethany near Jerusalem. It is easy to perceive from His last words, that the faith He left with them was not a somewhat spiritualised Judaism, but in truth the religion of mankind, with no other boundaries than the ends of the world. There was no reference in His mind to that kingdom of Israel, which was still the cherished dream of His disciples,* but to that kingdom of truth which, through the inspired word of His witnesses, should be established among all nations. "Ye shall receive power from on high, and shall be witnesses unto me to the uttermost parts of the earth."† As He spoke these words He was withdrawn ftom their sight to enter into the conditions of a higher life, free from all the limitations of human existence, a life truly divine at the right hand of the Father in the abode of glory, where He is preparing a place for us.

The ascension, recorded by Luke only, is implied by all the sacred writers, for none of them gives place to the idea that the risen Saviour might die a second time, which is the only alternative possible, apart from the mysterious fact authenticated by Gospel tradition. The glorification of Jesus commenced from the day when he rose from the grave; His body was no phantom; it retained its reality, since it could be handled and felt, could eat and drink; but it was nevertheless invested with new properties which distinguished it from its former condition. Jesus was not at once recognised by His disciples; He seemed able to transport Himself with strange rapidity from place to

* Acts i. 6. † Acts i. 8.

place. In the ascension He resumed all the glory which belonged to Him, and in that glory those divine attributes, by virtue of which He governs His Church and gives Himself by His Spirit to be the life of each believing soul. The ascension was the crown of His work; His final elevation was as needful as His first abasement.

II.—Reality of the Miracle.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a truth of such central importance to Christianity, that we cannot content ourselves with a simple statement of the facts, but feel bound to answer the principal objections brought against it. In the first place, there has been a very exaggerated statement of the discrepancies among the Gospel narratives of the event.* We do not dispute these discrepancies, and we make no claim to do away with them on any preconceived system; but estimated at their proper value, they never assume the importance of irreconcilable contradictions. They are perfectly naturally explained when it is remembered, that only one of the accounts which we possess is entirely by the hand of an eye witness. These very differences serve to establish the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, by discovering to us the evident traces it bears of a truly primitive account. If it is indeed John (as everything

* The following may be pointed out as the principal:—First, difference between Matthew and Mark, who speak of only one angel at the sepulchre, and Luke and John, who mention two (Matthew xxviii. 2; Mark xvi. 5; Luke xxiv. 4; John xx. 12). Second, according to Mark (xvi. 8), the women were terrified into silence; according to Luke xxiv. 9. they ran to bring the great tidings to the apostles. Third, according to Luke, Mary Magdalene saw the angelic vision before speaking to the apostles (Luke xxiv. 10); according to John, not till afterwards (John xx. 12). Fourth, the appearances are, according to Matthew, all in Galilee, according to Luke all at Jerusalem. We have already endeavoured to do away with some of these discrepancies, by the very manner in which we have reproduced the facts. We are glad to see our young theologians making a serious study of the miracle of the resurrection. We may mention two recent publications on the subject, the one by M. Henri Gambini, the other by M. P. Valloton.

tends to show) who relates that which he saw, we possess an irrefragable testimony, so much the more conclusive, that in all essential facts it is confirmed by the synoptics. From all our four Gospels it appears that Jesus rose from the tomb on the morning of the third day; all agree in speaking of a vision of angels, of the doubts of the pious women on the morning of this great day, and of the persistent unbelief of the disciples. The fourth Gospel, like the two first, mentions a meeting in Galilee; only while those who have preceded him confound distinct events, John distinguishes them, and reconciles Matthew's story, which speaks only of Galilee, with Luke's, which speaks only of Jerusalem. The incontestable discrepancies of our canonical narratives are proofs of their perfect honesty, and are readily accounted for by the strange agitation into which the disciples were thrown in consequence of so unexpected an event.*

Beside the objections of criticism, we must notice three principal explanations of the resurrection, all tending to repudiate the miracle. First of all, there has been the repetition of the odious calumny spread by the Sanhedrim against the the first Christians, that they stole the body of Jesus in order to spread a belief in his resurrection.† Our age would blush to take up such an argument, resorted to in one of the passionate reactions against truth in the eighteenth century. As has been

* Everything proves that in the fourth Gospel we have a narrative by an eye witness. Let there be a comparison of that which relates to Mary Magdalene in Matthew and in John. In the first Gospel everything is recorded. but indefinitely; in the fourth everything follows in natural connection. So also with the appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem. In Luke they are all united in one, which immediately precedes the ascension. No mention is made of the doubts of Thomas. John alone tells us how Jesus showed His disciples the marks of the nails in His hands and feet, especially after the apostles had greeted the disciples from Emmaus with the words, *The Lord is risen indeed.* In Matthew, who makes Galilee alone the scene of the resurrection life, mention is made of the doubts of the disciples (xxviii. 17); but this brief indication needs to be supplemented by the story of the unbelief of Thomas.

† Reimarus, "Fragments de Wolfenbüttel."

well said, it is infinitely easier to admit that the Christian Church is the offspring of a miracle, than to imagine it born of a lie.* The most violent enemies of Christianity repel such an insinuation, which, even if received, would explain nothing, for the fact which has to be accounted for is the change wrought in the disciples after the death of their Master, and the rejoicing confidence which succeeds to their despair. Now an act of roguery never raised the courage of any man.

The second explanation is open to the same objection. It starts with the supposition that the death of Jesus was apparent only, and leads of course to the negation of the resurrection. Such a theory receives no support from the fact quoted from the historian Josephus, that two crucified persons had by strenuous endeavours been brought back to consciousness.† The extraordinary sufferings of Jesus, His agony of soul, the spear wound in His side, the long interment—all are opposed to the admission of a hypothesis invented for the necesities of the case. Beside, what vitality could He have retained after such physical ordeals? It could not have been more than a living death, and the greatest precaution would have been necessary to preserve even an artificial existence. Truly, a man snatched, at the point of death, from the mortal hatred of his enemies, and mysteriously brought back to some measure of languishing life, could have possessed little power to transform timid lambs into lions.

The third theory, which has recently found many advocates, is that of visions. In France the morbid condition of Mary Magdalene has been insisted upon, and the birth of a religion has been boldly attributed to the hallucination of a nervous woman. In Germany more show of reason has been observed; the last historian of Jesus has prepared his argument with peculiar care.‡ He lays especial stress on texts taken from St. Paul. "I delivered unto you first of all," writes the great

* Beyschlag, "Die Auferstehung Christi." p. 14.
† Josephus, "Vita" 75. ‡ Strauss's New "Life of Jesus."

apostle to the Corinthian Christians, "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles, and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."* Paul, it is said, puts in the same category the appearance of the risen Redeemer to the disciples present at Jerusalem, and that to himself, on the road to Damascus, which was the beginning of his new life. Now that this last appearance was simply and purely a vision, is considered to be proved by the declaration made in his Epistle to the Galatians, "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me."† It is concluded that the various appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, belong to the realm of imagination, and not of fact. The apostles believed indeed, that Jesus was risen; they were no rogues, but visionaries. Such is the argument recently put forth in a very ingenious form.

We may give it an emphatic answer. It is certain that Paul in his letter to the Corinthians intends to speak of an actual appearance. "He was seen," he says, "of James, then of the apostles, then of me." In order to maintain that he confounded an actual appearance with a vision, it would be necessary to prove that he was ignorant of the true character of a vision. Now these things were perfectly familiar to the Jews; holy Scripture repeatedly draws the distinction between miraculous manifestations of Deity in the world, and simple visions which are quite apart from real facts. It was impossible, for instance, for a Jew to confound the divine visitation, with which Abraham was honoured in his tent on the eve of the destruction

* 1 Cor. xv. 3–8.

† *Ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί* (Gal. i. 16.) See Güder and Beyschlag's "Lectures on the Resurrection."

of Sodom, with the visions of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, beholding with the spiritual eye "the rod of an almond-tree" or symbolical animal forms.* A vision, properly so called, is distinguished from an appearance, in that it exists for the mind only. Such was that which Peter beheld in the city of Joppa, when the messengers of the centurion Cornelius stood knocking at the door of his house. "He fell into a trance," as he says, "and saw heaven opened." Yet further, St. Paul himself had visions; he speaks of being caught up into the third heaven, "whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of body I cannot tell."† It is evident that he was under no misconception as to the value of the terms, and that recognising fully the difference between a vision and an actual appearance, he could not confound the two. When he says that he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus, he means that he, like his fellow apostles, saw Him in real person: on this very ground he proclaims himself their equal. If he adds that Jesus was revealed in him, it is simply because external revelations have no value, unless they are so perceived by the eye of the soul as to become spiritual experiences. Paul would have been untrue to himself if he had not spoken of this inner and spiritual fact, which so far from excluding the outward and historical, implies it, as sight implies the object to be seen. Let us not forget that in the chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which Paul declares that he has seen the risen Christ, that which is spoken of is the bodily resurrection of believers. His argument would fall to the ground if what was intended was a mere vision, not an actual manifestation of Jesus. The testimony of the apostle to the Gentiles, instead of invalidating that of the other disciples, confirms it and transmutes objection into proof. Thus is the resurrection of Christ, on the third day, certified by a tradition older than that of our first three Gospels. This tradition is not only contained in texts, but is incorporated into the very worship of the Church,

* Jer. i. 12–17. † 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3.

by the setting apart of the first day of the week as the Lord's day.

The hypothesis of visions clashes with the most elementary principles of psychology. How can we suppose the repetition of the same hallucination in so many different minds? Such a coincidence would be conceivable only in a heated atmosphere, charged with fanatical expectation of a particular event. Now it is indisputable, from all evidence, that despondency was deep and general in the young Church. It was from that upper chamber, the doors of which were closed for fear of the Jews, in which was heard only the voice of sighs and lamentation, that the assurance of this greatest of miracles burst forth spontaneously. How could those who were so slow to believe in the event have been its inventors?

And yet they did believe, and this faith in the resurrection became their lever to move the world. What will account for such a change? "Christ is risen," replies the Church; and unless we are prepared to abandon the principle of causality, we feel driven to the same conclusion; for in attestation of the fact, she shows us not only the disciples at Jerusalem elevated, confirmed, transformed, and sealing their faith in this event with their blood, but Judaism and Paganism vanquished, one world crumbling away, another arising; she shows us all generations of Christians coming in succession to derive strength and consolation from this eternal fact. The Christian Church, as young, as living to-day, as eighteen centuries ago, does not rest upon a vision or a lie. Whether we contemplate the circumstances which preceded this day, or the great events which have followed it, it is not possible to place anything less than the great fact of the resurrection between the blank despair of the evening and the exultant joy of the morning, with all its mighty results for mankind.

III. Significance of the fact.

"The resurrection of Christ," says our most skilful adversary,

"is the Shibboleth by which the most widely differing views are tested." We do not deny the statement, which is, indeed, absolutely true. Is the world, or is it not, governed by a sovereign God who makes the natural law bend before the moral, and before the holy purposes of His merciful love, or does hard and inflexible necessity govern all the universe? In other words, is there a living and personal God, or is that which we call by this sacred name, out of respect to popular superstition, nothing else than inexorable fate, or rather, mere natural law? This is the question which must find an answer at the grave of Jesus. In truth, if He remained in the grave, we must conclude that death is stronger than perfect holiness, that the divine life itself is subject to it, and that that, which we have regarded as a result and a punishment of the abuse of moral freedom, is an irremediable physical fatality. Then natural are stronger than moral agencies, and we must needs bury our noblest aspirations with the body of Jesus. Whoever beholds in the Gospel mirror, the spotless perfection of Jesus, and again, sees in death the pre-eminent sign of man's condemnation, must exclaim with the apostle Peter, "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." If He did, in truth, remain in the grave, it is, we repeat, a victory of natural over moral law, and we are driven from the theistic conception of order to the apotheosis of nature.

The resurrection of Christ is further the only adequate proof of the achievement of redemption. Withdraw it, and we have upon the cross suffering nobly endured, at which our tears may well flow forth, but suffering which has no healing virtue, and does not avail to revoke the sentence of condemnation, which has weighed upon all the race of Adam since it was said to the first rebel, "Thou shalt surely die." In such a case Christ's mission on earth closes with ignominy and death. Man can trace it no further; and yet its closing utterance becomes the victorious watchword of a little army of disciples, which combining in itself every element of human weakness, is

yet strong to battle with and overthrow all the mighty ones of the earth. How can these things be?

It avails nothing to assert that it is enough to believe in the immortality of the soul. Was man indeed so fully assured even of this before Christ? Had not the purest of ancient sages stopped short at a *perhaps*, on the threshold of the dark regions which lie beyond the grave? Jesus alone brought to light that immortality, the dim consciousness of which lies deep in every soul of man, when He proved by a dazzling miracle that beyond the doors of the tomb is life and not annihilation. Against the terrible realities of the grave to which the human body is consigned, He set a glorious reality of consolation. We are not of the number of the great spirits who despise such evidences, in the agonising hours of mortal separation. Jesus came forth from the tomb as the head of a new humanity; St. Paul rightly calls Him "the first fruits of them that sleep." His resurrection is the certain pledge of that immortality which is neither absorption in the absolute, nor a succession of manifold and changing existences in which individuality is lost, but the full retention of personal identity in conditions of purity and blessedness unknown to life on earth.

Nor is this all. Supposing that we could, apart from the resurrection of Jesus, gain an assurance of immortality, the fact would nevertheless remain that He had entered that mysterious abode which thought visits only with tears, and where the divine life has not attained the full fruition which is in store for it, after the great consummations of the future. In any case, the relations are very incomplete, if not broken, between these departed souls and the survivors. All that can be said or imagined concerning them is easily chargeable with superstition. Can it be supposed that such an existence is His, who is to be the Head of His Church, and the divine Brother of us all? If His work consisted only in giving a model of virtue, His abiding influence might be reduced to that of a simple memory. But the supposition is inadmissible

if He is indeed the Redeemer of the world. The work of the invisible Christ continues that of the Christ visible; it is neither less active nor less direct, while it is more universal. He must then have attained the plenitude of spiritual life, and passed beyond that intermediate state, which is indeed a condition of rest and happiness, but yet is not the consummation of human destiny, according to the teaching of Scripture. Thus the resurrection forms part of the redemption.

It must be evident how far we are from regarding this great fact as only an external buttress of Christianity. It is, indeed, the confirmation of all the teaching of the Master, and without it that teaching would be smitten with barrenness, and would be open to the charge of falsity. Apostolic testimony would be equally deprived of all value; for unless we deny the evidence altogether, it must be admitted that the teaching of the apostles rests entirely on the affirmation of this miracle. But the resurrection is more than a prop of the Christian faith, even if that prop were an indestructible pillar; it forms part of the very subject matter of religion; it is the last of the great facts of redemption, so that to reject it is to remove not one of the pillars of the building, which would be sufficiently serious, but one of its very foundations. We can conceive the rejection of Christianity on account of this miracle, but that there should be a pretence of receiving the Gospel, while this is set aside, or contemptuously treated as of secondary importance, passes our comprehension and offends our common sense. In short, the empty tomb of Christ has been the cradle of the Church; and if in this foundation of her faith the Church has been mistaken, she must needs lay herself down by the side of the mortal remains, I say not of a man, but of a religion.

CONCLUSION.

WE have sought, in the simple narratives of primitive Christianity, the faithful and living image of Christ. Our four Gospels have given us a type of perfection such as the world has never before or since seen equalled. This high ideal is found not as one of those bold generalisations, which are the fugitive and brilliant dreams of the spirit, but in the perfectly simple form of a human life unfolded before our eyes. The great ascetic of India comes forth, with his doctrine of death, from the depths of mysterious forests, and lays hold of the imagination by the very strangeness of his appearance. Not so with Jesus. The humble village in which He was brought up is known to all; He lived the common life of the lower classes of His people; He was despised because He sat at meat with publicans. He sought no distinction by extravagant self-mortification, nor did He make any appeal, like Mahomet, to the warlike passions. He bequeathed to His disciples, not the scimitar and its conquests, but the cross and its reproach. In the conditions of every-day life was displayed that moral perfection which is without a parallel, because it united all the qualities elsewhere found apart.

Can it be supposed that such a type as this, so human in its divine beauty, was formed from the combination of the most diverse elements of religion and philosophy, in an age of universal fusion? Without dwelling again on the argument resting on facts, which we have drawn from the history of other religions, to set aside this explanation, we will only ask whether such a form as that of Jesus resembles the statue of gold, brass, and clay, which the king of Babylon beheld in the famous

dream interpreted by Daniel. Such a mingling of heterogeneous elements could have resulted only in a monstrous idol, for which a pagoda could scarcely have been found. The Christ of the Gospels did not come forth from the crucibles of Alexandrine philosophy; He lived, and lived as He is made known to us by His apostles. He satisfies at once our aspirations after the ideal by His perfect holiness, and our deep needs of consolation and restoration by His sufferings and sacrifice. He meets us in our greatness and our misery, and therefore He is called the Saviour of the world. Such is our conclusion. If it needed to be established now by fresh arguments, this book would have been in vain; and nothing which we might add would bring conviction.

We will limit ourselves to one further remark. Beside our four Gospels, there is a fifth which has been eighteen centuries in writing: this is the work of Christ among mankind. It bears witness to miracles as great as those of our canonical narratives. The track of His footseps is seen wherever there has been any real progress in good, in love, in right, in the moral elevation of men. No revolution in the history of the world can be compared with that which placed the Cross as the boundary between two entirely different ages, and which caused to flow forth from the rock of Calvary a river of life, which though at times troubled in its course, rapidly purifies itself again, and goes on fertilising the most barren soil. At the basis of our modern civilisation lies the thought of Jesus. It is this, and this alone, which has given to our modern West its vast superiority and irresistible impulse to progress. We marvel, therefore, at the strange attempt of those of our contemporaries who, under the pretext of renovation, seek to bring us back to the materialistic doctrines, under the weight of which the East still sleeps its heavy sleep, haunted by impure dreams, and broken by bloody crises.

But we can invoke another testimony even more decisive than the social results of Christianity. The Gospel itself is

written in the hearts of Christians: it is not in their eyes the sacred scroll which preserves the annals of a dead past; it is for them the renewal of that past, which belongs to the present and to every age, because it is eternal. This Christ of the Gospels is known to every Christian now in a living and personal relation, as He was known to the sick whom He healed, and the sinners whom He pardoned in Judæa and Galilee. Every one of us who possesses more than a religion of form and habit, has a right to stand up and say, like the blind man at Jerusalem, "I was blind, but now I see." Every one of us, like the disciple in the hour of denial, has been arrested by that look which pierces the heart and conscience, and has risen up at the words, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee." The scenes of the upper chamber, at the Last Supper, are daily renewed. Christian worship is nothing else than a mystic communion between the worshipping soul and the redeeming Saviour. Jesus bends over all the beds of sickness and of death where His followers languish; He enters the dwellings of the poor, to break to them their daily bread. These experiences have gone on from the foundation of the Church; the Christian heart of the nineteenth century responds to that of St. Peter and St. John. One divine life flows through this great body like the blood in the veins, and all those who have shared in it, and who share in it still, trace it back to that Jesus who died in the year of Rome 783. For Him have suffered and perished the confessors of ages of persecution, all declaring, like the proto-martyr, that they saw Him with the eye of faith. For Him thousands of heroic hearts in all lands and ages have throbbed and bled, and have made great sacrifices, and sacrifices unknown to fame. In every rank of society, in all stages of culture and civilisation, from the burning sands of Africa to the heart of our brilliant cities, the same results have been produced, and the same hymn of adoration has ascended in honour of the Crucified.

Against the boldest negations, these confessors of every age

and condition set this triumphant saying of St. John: "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." Assuredly, whatever may be said, we have a right to appeal to this fifth Gospel; it brings weighty confirmation to the four canonical narratives. Idle mysticism let it be called! To us there are other realities beside those which can be touched and handled; and we cannot be persuaded that this great accord of Christian souls is founded on either myth or legend.

At the close of this long contemplation of the divine model on which I have been gazing, in the earnest endeavour to reproduce some of its features, I feel overwhelmed with the sense of my powerlessness. "I would fain, O divine Son of Mary," to use the words of one of Thy noblest confessors, "feeble as I am, have said something great of Thee."* At times I have seemed, in the brief illumination of some blessed hour, to see Thee in Thy divine Majesty—Thy brow radiant with love and grief, and crowned with that spotless purity which has terrors only for the proud, because it is inseparable from Thy sovereign love. I have seemed to see Thee on the shore of the lake Thou lovedst, or in the villages of Galilee, in the midst of that retinue of the afflicted and despised, who formed Thy guard of honour in Thy royal progress of mercy? But when I have sought to fix the holy vision, the pencil has trembled in my unskilful hands, and I have only been able to give a dim outline of that which had bowed me in the dust in adoration before Thee. What are we to describe Thy holiness?

The distance is too great from us to Thee! How can we, from the lowness of our common lives, rise to the inspiration of that life which was consumed by one single thought of love, and which, from its commencement to its close, was one offering to God and man! Plunged in petty vanities and mean ambition, how can we comprehend Thine utter scorn for human glory, O King crowned with thorns! Upon us falls that word

* Justin Martyr, "Account of his Martyrdom."

spoken in Thy just indignation: "Ye are from beneath, I am from above." Therefore it is, that for this very work itself, I crave Thy forgiveness. My hope, my consolation, is that Thou wilt surely disperse the clouds with which, in ignorance or weakness, I may have darkened Thine adorable countenance, and manifest Thyself plainly to the willing heart in which I may have awakened a desire to know Thee better.

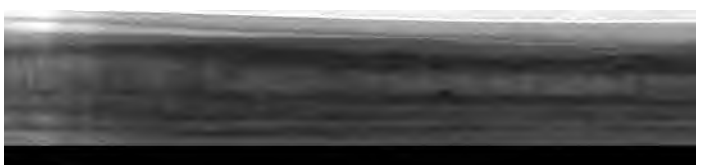
FINIS.

UNWIN BROTHERS, THE GRESHAM STEAM PRESS, BUCKLERSBURY.









BT301.P7413 1868
Jesus Christ: his times, life and w
Andover-Harvard 001662730

3 2044 077 947 125

Pressensé, Edmond
Déhault de
Jesus Christ.

BT
301
.P7413
1868